

September 1, 2020

Dear Vice President Biden,

Congratulations on your nomination as the presidential candidate for the Democratic Party. As you have said, this is a historic time for our nation. Over 180,000 Americans have lost their lives to the COVID-19 pandemic that continues to ravage the nation. Millions are rising up to demand racial justice and an end to white supremacy. Donald Trump has put our democracy on the line with his attacks on our right to vote and threats to contest the election. Meanwhile, the climate emergency is ravaging our country, as supercharged wildfires burn across western states, climate-intensified floods and derechos slam the Midwest, and sea level rise threatens our coasts.

We want to thank you for your bold plans to combat the climate crisis and create millions of good-paying, union jobs in a clean energy economy. We applaud the ways in which you have put environmental justice at the heart of your plans, making sure that the communities of color who are on the frontlines of this crisis are at the forefront of its solutions. Implementing your plans would be a major step toward putting this country back on track to meet our global commitments under the Paris Agreement while centering the communities most harmed by environmental injustice.

Your leadership on climate and environmental justice is why we urge you to ban all fossil fuel executives, lobbyists, and representatives from any advisory or official position on your campaign, transition team, cabinet, and administration.

For decades, oil, gas, and coal executives have lied to the American people about the threat of climate change and lobbied against government action, all while attempting to present themselves as part of the solution. During this election, the American Petroleum Institute is [spending upwards of \\$24,000 per day](#) to mislead voters into thinking that fossil gas is “clean” energy, even though methane emissions associated with gas can make it worse than coal. Meanwhile, fossil fuel corporations have continued to expand their operations, destroy our environment, and pollute communities — especially communities of color — across this nation and around the world.

The Trump Administration has fully embraced these fossil fuel interests. Former oil and gas lobbyists now run the Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of the Interior. At their behest, the Trump administration has instigated [100 environmental rollbacks](#), putting our health and safety at risk. During the coronavirus pandemic, the administration has continued to [slash environmental protections](#) and give [billions of dollars](#) in bailouts to fossil fuels.

These abuses have real costs in the communities that you have pledged to serve. Nearly [half of Americans](#) now breathe polluted air, the [vast majority](#) of which comes from burning fossil fuels, according to research by the American Lung Association. According to a 2016 NAACP report, [71% of African Americans](#) live in counties in violation of air pollution standards. Indigenous people have seen their rights trampled to build dangerous new pipelines like Dakota Access and Keystone XL. Latina women in Texas who live near gas flaring are seeing a [50% increase](#) in premature births.

To advance environmental justice, you must stand up to fossil fuel CEOs, stop the expansion of oil, gas and coal production, and rapidly transition us away from fossil fuels. A Biden administration free of fossil fuel interests would signal your commitment to restoring a government by and for the American people.

Banning fossil fuel representatives isn't just good policy — it's good politics. According to a [new Data for Progress poll](#), American voters oppose fossil fuel industry lobbyists or representatives working in the executive branch by a 22-point margin. Sixty-one (61) percent of Democrats oppose fossil fuel industry representatives working in the administration, while only 22 percent are open to the idea. Ruling out positions for fossil fuel executives, lobbyists, and representatives is a critical way to show your commitment to a future that prioritizes people, not polluters.

This critical need to advance climate and environmental justice is why we are concerned by initial [reports](#) that people with ties to fossil fuel interests have been advising your campaign and may be angling for roles in your administration. People who left government to serve on a fossil fuel industry board, enrich themselves as oil and gas advisors, receive funding from fossil fuel companies to espouse “reasonable” climate positions, or work with industry front groups should have no role in a Biden administration or campaign. Neither should fossil fuel backers on Wall Street, who have attempted to profit off pollution.

We appreciate your team's recent reiteration of your commitment to eliminate fossil fuel subsidies as part of your comprehensive approach to climate action and environmental justice. A commitment from you to ban all fossil fuel executives, lobbyists, and representatives from your administration would go far to assuage any lingering concerns about your climate commitments that may have been raised when the [DNC dropped support](#) for ending fossil fuel subsidies from the 2020 Platform.

Many thousands of talented experts, advocates, and community leaders who do not represent coal, oil, and gas companies would gladly serve in your administration and help move our country forward into the clean energy future. They've shown the expertise, principles, and dedication that should be a requirement for any administration role. We urge you to choose them over the fossil fuel CEOs, lobbyists, and representatives who are profiting from climate destruction.

We thank you for making combatting the climate crisis a top priority for your campaign. We look forward to working alongside you to build back better, create a new, clean energy economy that creates millions of good-paying, union jobs, and address the crises of climate change, COVID-19, mass unemployment, and the environmental injustice and racism that have plagued our nation for too long. Millions of us are ready to get to work: There's no need to slow us down with people tied to fossil fuel interests.

Sincerely,

[145 undersigned organizations]

Activate Virginia
Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments
Anthropocene Alliance
ART NOT WAR
Athens County's Future Action Network

Be the Change Colorado
Berks Gas Truth
Better Path Coalition
Bold Alliance
Breathe Easy Susquehanna County

Bucks Environmental Action
Call to Action Colorado
Camp White Pine
Capital Assets Sustainable Energy
Development
Catholic Divestment Network

Catholic Network US
Center for Biological Diversity Action Fund
Center for Climate Integrity
Center for Popular Democracy
Center for a Sustainable Coast

Center for Sustainable Economy
Clean Energy Action Colorado
Climate Hawks Vote
The Climate Mobilization
Climate Reality Coastal Georgia

Community for Sustainable Energy
Crestone-Baca Resiliency
Data for Progress
Demand Progress
Dēmos Action

Dogwood Alliance
Earth Ethics
Earth Guardians Bay Area
Earth Ministry — Washington Interfaith Power
& Light
Earthworks Action Fund

EcoEquity

ELT, Inc.
Endangered Species Coalition
Faithful America
Food & Water Action

FracTracker Alliance
Friends of the Earth Action
Frontera Water Protection Alliance
Fund Our Future
Future Coalition

Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives
GreenFaith
Greening Georgia
Greenpeace, Inc.
Harford County Climate Action

Harrington Investments
Heirs To Our Oceans
Hip Hop Caucus
Honor the Earth
The HUB for Progress

Indigenous Cultures Institute
Inland Ocean Coalition
Interfaith Power & Light
International Indigenous Youth Council
Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement

Indivisible
Jetpac
John Muir Project
Justice Democrats
Labor Network for Sustainability

The Last Plastic Straw
Lebanon Pipeline Awareness
Livelihoods Knowledge Exchange Network
The Lookout Alliance
Louisiana Bucket Brigade

McKinnon Connections
MN350 Action
MoveOn
National Children's Campaign

Neighbors Against the Gas Plants
New York Communities for Change
Nittany Valley Environmental Coalition
North Carolina Democratic Party Progressive
Caucus
Northern Colorado Community Rights
Network
Nuclear Information and Resource Service

Oil Change U.S.
Olympic Climate Action
Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd —
U.S. Provinces
Our Revolution
Oxfam America Action Fund

Peace Action
Pennsylvania Interfaith Power & Light
People's Action
People's Justice Council
Peoples Climate Movement New York

Physicians for Social Responsibility
Pennsylvania
Progressive Change Campaign Committee
Progressive Democrats of America
Project CoffeeHouse
Property Rights & Pipeline Center

Public Citizen
Rachel Carson Council
Rainforest Action Network
Rapid Shift Network
Renewables Now Loveland

Responsible Drilling Alliance
Revolving Door Project
Rio Grande International Study Center
RISE St. James
SanDiego350

Seeding Sovereignty
SoCal 350 Climate Action
Social Security Works

Southern Oregon Climate Action Now
Sunflower Alliance

Sunrise El Paso
Sunrise Movement
Sustainne
Take on Wall Street
Tax March

Texas Campaign for the Environment
Toxic Free Philly
Turtle Island Restoration Network
Urban Climate Nexus
Voices for Progress

We Own It
WildEarth Guardians
X-Lab
Zero Hour
350 Action

350 Bay Area
350 Butte County
350 Charlotte
350 Colorado Action
350 Conejo / San Fernando Valley

350 Eastside
350 Everett
350 Juneau — Climate Action for Alaska
350 Kishwaukee
350 Maine

350 New Hampshire Action
350 New Orleans
350 NYC
350 Seattle
350 Tacoma

350 Triangle
350 Wenatchee
350 West Sound Climate Action
350 Yakima
The 5 Gyres Institute