

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 22, 2021

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue Northwest
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden,

As we continue our work to advance the Build Back Better agenda and create millions of good climate jobs, we write to you to express our grave concern that ongoing actions by your administration threaten to undermine our shared goal to further climate, racial, and economic justice. We want to commend you for your commitments to a “whole-of-government” climate mobilization,¹ federal relief for toxic pollution in Black, Brown, and Indigenous communities,² and respect for Tribal sovereignty, self-governance, and vigorous consultation.³ However, we are deeply concerned about the administration’s ongoing support for fossil fuel infrastructure, pipelines, and leases, including through government subsidies. Continuing to develop and burn fossil fuels actively jeopardizes the lives and livelihoods of our community members, and it undoubtedly undercuts the hard-fought investments we’ve secured for our districts.

Earlier this year, the International Energy Agency reiterated what scientists have made clear for decades: oil, gas and coal expansion must stop now to align with the absolute maximum 1.5° C climate limit that science and justice demand.⁴ Moderate and technical organizations are agreeing that we must never build fossil fuel infrastructure again.

As such, now is the time to use your authority under existing law to immediately stop fossil fuel expansion and declare a climate emergency as a fundamental part of your push to invest in good jobs, environmental justice, a just transition, and a future powered by renewable energy.⁵ In the process, we are committed to ensuring that industry workers have equivalent or superior wages, working conditions, benefits, and labor rights than they have now.

Fossil fuel projects fuel the climate crisis while disproportionately polluting Black, brown, Indigenous, and low-income communities and destroying natural landscapes. The failure of the United States government to phase out fossil fuels is inextricably related to rising asthma rates and the fact that nearly every household in Louisiana's Cancer Alley has lost someone to the

¹ The White House. “FACT SHEET: President Biden Takes Executive Actions to Tackle the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad, Create Jobs, and Restore Scientific Integrity Across Federal Government,” January 27, 2021. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/01/27/fact-sheet-president-biden-takes-executive-actions-to-tackle-the-climate-crisis-at-home-and-abroad-create-jobs-and-restore-scientific-integrity-across-federal-government/>.

² Joe Biden for President: Official Campaign Website. “The Biden Plan to Secure Environmental Justice and Equitable Economic Opportunity.” Accessed October 19, 2021. <https://joebiden.com/environmental-justice-plan/>.

³ The White House. “Memorandum on Tribal Consultation and Strengthening Nation-to-Nation Relationships,” January 26, 2021. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2021/01/26/memorandum-on-tribal-consultation-and-strengthening-nation-to-nation-relationships/>.

⁴ “Net Zero by 2050 – Analysis - IEA.” Accessed October 19, 2021. <https://www.iea.org/reports/net-zero-by-2050>.

⁵ “Legal-Authority-for-Presidential-Climate-Action.Pdf.” Accessed October 19, 2021. <https://www.climatepresident.org/Legal-Authority-for-Presidential-Climate-Action.pdf>.

deadly disease.⁶ Our communities — and many others all across the country — have been fighting for their health and their way of life for generations.

We have joined our Indigenous siblings in calling on your administration to deny and revoke federally issued permits for pipelines including Line 3, Dakota Access, and the Spire pipeline. Line 3 is a massive tar sands crude oil pipeline that will lock in a future of dangerous carbon pollution. Many of us visited Line 3 this fall and were horrified by its pathways through treaty lands and across sensitive habitats. It is obvious that an environmental impact assessment has still not been conducted. The process of rapid construction disregarded treaties and enabled horrific police violence against water protectors.⁷ The project has already spilled thousands of gallons of toxic drilling fluid into Minnesota's waters, and is now on track to cause more pollution and climate impact than 50 new coal-fired power plants.⁸

The mistakes and failures that allowed Line 3 and other pipelines to proceed must not be repeated. Our communities demand better. As such, we stand together in calling on you to use existing law to do the following:

- Direct all agencies within your administration to reject *all* fossil fuel infrastructure permit approvals, from pipelines and export terminals to petrochemical plants;
- Follow through on your promise to ban federal fossil fuel leasing and drilling;
- End fossil fuel exports by reinstating the four-decades-long crude oil export ban using your authority under the National Emergencies Act, and directing the Department of Energy to reject applications for gas exports to the extent allowed by the Natural Gas Act;
- Work with us to immediately develop a just transition program to give all affected workers up to six years of full pay and benefits, retraining and relocation money, guaranteed housing, utilities, and health care, as well as a bridge to retirement; and
- Declare a climate emergency under the National Emergency Act and the Defense Production Act to launch the biggest jobs stimulus since World War II – redirecting a portion of military spending to accelerated construction of renewable energy projects, and providing critical loan guarantees to support a rapid, just buildout of renewable energy.

As elected officials, it is our duty to safeguard the public interest. We are committed to working with you to ensure our communities can flourish, and that inherently means taking the actions needed to urgently phase out fossil fuels as integral to addressing the climate crisis.

Sincerely,



CORI BUSH
Member of Congress

⁶ “‘Almost Every Household Has Someone That Has Died from Cancer’ | US News | The Guardian.” Accessed October 19, 2021. <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/ng-interactive/2019/may/06/cancertown-louisiana-reserve-special-report>.

⁷ “An Oil Company Paid Police \$2 Million to Defend Its Pipeline From Protests.” Accessed October 19, 2021. <https://www.vice.com/en/article/4avp3w/an-oil-company-paid-police-dollar2-million-to-defend-its-pipeline-from-protests>.

⁸ “A Giant Step Backward: Carbon Impact of the Line 3 Pipeline - Oil Change International.” Accessed October 19, 2021. <http://priceofoil.org/2020/01/29/line-3-climate-impact/>.

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