

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE AND CLIMATE CHANGE INITIATIVE

STATEMENT OF SOLIDARITY

Introduction

We, the undersigned, have met in a gathering on climate change and environmental justice. We have heard from scientists and policy analysts, from Arctic communities and residents of ecosystems already impacted by the effects of climate change, and from community activists from areas such as Cancer Alley in Louisiana already breathing the toxins of the fossil fuel industry. We have shared testimonies of struggle and strategies for reducing the human impact on climate change and for achieving environmental and economic justice. The urgency of responding to climate change is undeniable; to ignore the issue means environmental and social disaster for all. The sins we commit against mother earth today will haunt our children and children's children tomorrow.

Statement of Solidarity

People of color, Indigenous peoples and workers bear a disproportionate health, social, and economic burden of a society addicted to a fossil fuel economy. As such, they are the first victims of government inaction, corporate abuse, and negligent public policy. In solidarity, we stand together with people who are being affected now by climate change and those who will be affected in the future. We acknowledge that the people most vulnerable are disproportionately people in the global South, poor people, people of color, and Indigenous peoples of the global North, including in the United States.

We are in solidarity with workers whose health and safety are compromised by polluting industries, workers whose lives and well-being depend on their employment in polluting industries, and workers who will seek new forms of employment as the world transitions from a fossil fuel economy. All workers must be made whole.

We are in solidarity with Indigenous peoples who experience the destruction of the global environment as an attack on their spiritual foundations, and with communities everywhere whose lives, homes and environment have been compromised by climate change and the industries that cause it. We acknowledge that climate change is impacting these communities. Moreover, the mechanisms that create climate change are the same ones that have advanced environmental racism in other areas. The struggles of these people, workers, and communities for the environment and for justice must lead the resistance to climate change.

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Call to Action

Environmental Justice organizations assert leadership on this issue. We are ready to work collectively with others to demand corporate and government accountability and justice for fenceline communities, frontline workers, the nations of the global South, and the communities of "the South within the North."

Though most affected, the voices of Indigenous peoples, people of color, low-income people and workers have been ignored to date on this issue. These communities have their own unique concerns and voice that must be included in any policy discussions about climate change.

We issue this call to action, to organize, link, and advance this multigenerational struggle for a just transition to a clean and sustainable economy.

We seek to ensure an equitable climate policy that generates ample revenue to fund transitional programs and initiatives that assist people most vulnerable.

We acknowledge that the U.S. is the major contributor to the problem of human-contributed climate change and maintains a unique position as a world leader. The science is clear—negative impacts of global warming will accelerate under present policies. Yet, the U.S. has thus far abdicated a leadership role to the long-term detriment of the entire world.

We believe that steps to reduce global warming can and should protect workers, low-income households, communities, and the economy. No policy should be implemented at the expense of countries of the global South or otherwise promote environmental racism. The choice of technologies able to protect the workplace and environment should be available to all.

In fact, sensible choices do exist. We support energy-efficiency, conservation and renewable energy policies and practices. Global warming policies should not give away the right to pollute. We oppose any "grandfathering" of polluting industries. We support the precautionary principle—caution in the face of scientific uncertainty. In addition, we advocate for a transition to an economy devoted to

We seek responsible action now. The United State's responsibility in creating the problem requires significant reductions within the U.S. We urge the readers of this document to support our collective effort for an environmentally clean, safe, productive, and just society free of the effects of global climate change. Policy makers must include the voices of those most vulnerable to climate change in the development of just and effective climate change policy now.

Statement signed by the following:

- Tom Athanasiou and Paul Baer of Eco-Equity
- Shantilal Bhagat, Ecumenical Eco-Justice Network
- Jose Bravo and Jenice View of Just Transition Alliance
- Paige Brown, Corporation For Enterprise Development
- Bunyan Bryant*, Professor, School of Natural Resources, University of Michigan
(*Individual endorsement, affiliation provided for identification purposes only*)
- Robert Bullard, Environmental Justice Resource Center, Clark Atlanta University;
National Black Environmental Justice Network
- Cecil Corbin-Mark, West Harlem Environmental Action
- Richard Dalton, Alaska Council of Indigenous Environmental Network
- Felicia Davis, Georgia Coalition for the People's Agenda; Joseph E. Lowery Institute for
Justice and Human Rights
- Michel Gelobter, Redefining Progress
- Virginia Gill, Environmental Justice Program Coordinator, General Board of Church and
Society, The United Methodist Church; ECO-Justice Working Group National Council of
Churches of Christ
- Tom Goldtooth, Indigenous Environmental Network
- Bob Gough, Intertribal Council on Utility Policy
- Art Conrad Ivanoff, Native Village of Unalakleet
- Sarah James, Council of Athabascan Tribal Government
- Larissa Law, Gwich'in Steering Committee
- Genaro Lopez, Southwest Workers Union; Southwest Network for Economic and
Environmental Justice
- Ansje Miller, Redefining Progress
- Terry Ogawa, United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries
- Colleen Poler, Great Lakes Regional Indigenous Environmental Network
- Christine Shahin Wood, Antiochian Orthodox Representative
- Yvonne Scruggs-Leftwich, Black Leadership Forum
- Ruben Solis, Southwest Workers Union; Southwest Network for Economic and
Environmental Justice
- Amit Srivastava, CorpWatch
- Jan Stevens, Oklahoma Regional Environmental Network
- Juanita Stewart, North Baton Rouge Environmental Association; Louisiana Bucket
Brigade
- John Taylor, Benjamin E. Mays Center; Georgia Kids Against Pollution
- Jacqueline Ward, Southern Organizing Committee for Economic and Social Justice
- Beverly Wright, Deep South Center for Environmental Justice, Xavier University;
National Black Environmental Justice Network
- Anthony Dorsey, Illai Kenney, Quiana Porter, Steven Character, Brandon Williams,
Sasha Turner, Niyoka Jordan, Teneya Davis, and Chauntaye Fayson, Georgia Kids
Against Pollution
- Abby Golash and Shadia Wood, KAP Youth Leaders