



August 12th, 2022

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President Joseph R. Biden
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden:

The Green Leadership Trust (GLT) is a cross-organizational network that builds the power of the environmental movement by expanding the impact and leadership of Black, Indigenous, Latinx and all people of color serving on its Boards of Directors. We have been part of decades of groundwork that catalyzed both the White House and Congress' advancement of a climate agenda that recognizes how racialized communities and working people are critical constituencies in the battle against climate change.

As we are on the brink of the passage of historic energy and climate legislation through Congress, we, the undersigned members of GLT, are deeply disturbed by ways that the Inflation Reduction Act (The Act) diminishes that climate agenda. We are deeply troubled that several of The Act's provisions will delay progress towards just climate policies because of its failure to address the core environmental and economic well-being of communities. We urge the Administration (and our own environmental movement) to reckon with how essential community is injured by The Act and to immediately respond with climate policies, regulations, and curative legislation that can respond to the harms it will produce.

The Inflation Reduction Act contains provisions that will unleash technological responses to the climate crisis, allocating billions of dollars for clean energy and vehicles, and other incentives. The Act invests billions in industrial and infrastructure investments. It has the potential to provide for needed housing upgrades and jobs. It also aims to improve air quality and ensure access to clean drinking water. However, the legislation includes relatively modest levels of investment in the environmental justice communities that have suffered disproportionately from our nation's reliance on fossil fuels.

In our analysis, the legislative package will expand sacrifice zones to compound harm to our communities. Similarly, we are concerned that the majority of mainstream environmental organizations have failed to elevate these concerns. Specifically, we are alarmed about the following provisions:

- Provides generous tax credits but, as a result, neglects the pocket-book support that working people will need to move away from fossil fuels, like increased mass transit, income-independent subsidies for shifting to electric appliances, and other forms of progressive economic incentives. In addition, a reliance on tax credits to polluters has the net economic effect of subsidizing them and undermining critical sources of revenue (polluter pays) we all need to move towards efficiency and renewables
- Includes support for carbon capture and sequestration (CCS). The Administration must plot a course back towards power plant policy that is both environmentally sound and

politically sustainable. It must ensure that CCS neither extends the life of plants that should be mothballed asap nor extends the toxic pollution risks that fenceline communities already face.

- Mandates that the federal government offer up parts of the Gulf of Mexico and Alaska's Cook Inlet for oil and gas development. It also requires additional oil and gas leasing, in order for new wind and solar projects to be approved.
- Grants extra legal approval of the Mountain Valley Pipeline, a project which has been opposed for years by environmentalists, civil rights activists, and many Democratic state lawmakers in Virginia, which would carry natural gas from the Marcellus shale fields in West Virginia across nearly 1,000 streams and wetlands before ending in Virginia.
- Provides for an odious side deal to approve a separate bill that would make it harder for opponents to challenge energy projects under the National Environmental Policy Act – a bedrock environmental law – by setting a two-year time limit for challenges.
- Requires the president to establish twenty five “priority” projects on federal lands that must include fossil fuels and nuclear energy.
- Revises a section of the Clean Water Act in a way that would make it more difficult to block or delay pipeline projects.
- Overlooks and excludes community based financial institutions, such as MDIs, CDFIs and credit unions, from directly benefiting and thus enabling climate finance.

In addition to these devastating compromises, we are exasperated by the continued reliance on exclusive and undemocratic processes for public matters. The impact of which is that the fossil fuel interests had more of a say in the making of game changing legislation than the people whose health and safety are determined by its contents.

Our members are life long advocates from impacted communities of color. And while we understand high stakes deal-making, we reject compromises that continue to put fossil fuel development at the center of our nation's economy. We cannot abide the continued willingness by our nation's leadership to sacrifice the lives and health of our communities on the altars of greed and political expediency. And certainly not for bargains that are unsustainable, unjust, and morally unconscionable.

In this moment, we remain committed to our life's work of protecting the sacred and the sustainable. We affirm that the future requires us to speak out. In our collective capacity we stand committed to the long-term fight for equity, justice, and a better future for our children and this planet.

Sincerely,

The Green Leadership Trust

*Board affiliations are included for identification purposes and does not signify endorsement by the organization

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