



February 9, 2022

Dear Members of Congress:

As health organizations, we represent physicians, nurses, mental health professionals, public health and health care professionals, health scientists and researchers, patients and advocates all dedicated to promoting health and saving lives. Climate change is a health emergency. Addressing it by transitioning the nation to clean, renewable electricity and clean transportation will avoid the worst health impacts of climate change and achieve immediate improvements in air quality and health at the same time. That is why our groups strongly support the climate provisions included in the House-passed Build Back Better Act. As negotiations continue, we are asking Congress to ensure that the investments in the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution listed below are passed into law.

Air pollution and climate change are impacting the health of millions of Americans now, and the passage of Build Back Better into law is crucial for mitigating worse impacts in the future. Emissions from fossil fuel or other combustion-based operations are worsening air quality, which is especially harmful for children, seniors, pregnant people, people with respiratory illnesses and people who work or play outside. These same emissions are also driving climate change and with it, sweeping and dramatic health harms. More intense and frequent wildfires, strong storms and persistent extreme heat are already causing physical and mental harm.

As a result of numerous current and legacy racist policies and practices, people of color are disproportionately more likely to have multiple pre-existing health conditions, to face social disadvantages and environmental risks that make them more vulnerable to climate change. Communities of color are also three times more likely than white communities to live in areas experiencing the worst air pollution.<sup>1</sup>

We appreciate and the House passage of the Build Back Better Act and the months of negotiations that led to this point. We also understand that changes will need to be made to the House-passed bill as it moves through the Senate. We urge you to recognize the urgency of climate action and to include the following provisions:

- **Establish long-term clean energy tax incentives.** Ten-year tax incentives for clean electricity, energy storage and transmission will help drive innovation and deployment of pollution-free energy, and the inclusion of these tax incentives in the final bill will represent a large portion of the emissions reductions needed to reduce climate-warming greenhouse gas emissions 50% by 2030.
- **Rapidly transition to zero-emission vehicles and technology.** The transportation sector is the largest contributor to greenhouse gases and a significant source of air pollution. Making it easier to purchase electric vehicles, including medium- and heavy-duty vehicles, through tax credits and incentives, paired with investments in the necessary charging infrastructure to support them, will have immediate health benefits by way of reductions in air pollution and long-term benefits by reducing climate pollution.
- **Commit to environmental justice by ensuring 40% of investments in clean air go to frontline communities.** Any efforts to reduce air and climate pollutants should not worsen existing inequities and should direct benefits to the communities that have been disproportionately burdened by air pollution and climate change.

Investing in efforts to reduce climate change is an opportunity to protect both physical and mental health— particularly for underserved communities – that Congress and the nation can't afford to miss. The below organizations urge swift and bold investments towards a healthier future.

Sincerely,

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<sup>1</sup> American Lung Association. State of the Air. Apr 2021. [www.lung.org/sota](http://www.lung.org/sota)

Allergy & Asthma Network

Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments

American Academy of Pediatrics

American College of Physicians

American Lung Association

American Psychological Association

American Public Health Association

American Thoracic Society

Arkansas Public Health Association

Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America

Children's Environmental Health Network

Climate for Health

Climate Psychiatry Alliance

Colorado Public Health Association

Delaware Academy of Medicine / Delaware Public Health Association

Health Care Without Harm

Illinois Association of School Nurses

Illinois Public Health Association

Indiana Public Health Association

Interfaith Public Health Network

Maine Public Health Association

Medical Students for a Sustainable Future

National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health

National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners

National Association of School Nurses

National Birth Equity Collaborative

National Environmental Health Association

National Hispanic Medical Association

National League for Nursing

NC Public Health Association

Nevada Public Health Association

New Jersey Local Boards of Health Association

New Jersey Public Health Association

New York State Public Health Association

NJSOPHE

North Dakota Public Health Association

Pennsylvania Public Health Association

Philippine Nurses Association of America

Physicians for Social Responsibility

Preventive Cardiovascular Nurses Association

PSR Colorado

Public Health Institute

Respiratory Health Association

San Francisco Bay Physicians for Social Responsibility

Tennessee Public Health Association

Utah Public Health Association

Washington Physicians for Social Responsibility

Washington State Public Health Association

Wisconsin Health Professionals for Climate Action

Wisconsin Public Health Association