



August 9, 2021

Dear Members of Congress:

As health organizations, we represent physicians, nurses, mental health professionals, public health 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. Congress' current work on legislation to invest in infrastructure and other priorities *must* yield a package of climate change measures that meet the urgency of this moment by achieving a roughly 50% reduction in U.S. greenhouse gas emissions by 2030.

Air pollution and climate change are impacting the health of millions of Americans now, and those impacts will only get worse without action. 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.¹

Congress must seize this moment to make major investments in climate and health solutions. By cleaning up the nation's electricity and transportation, you can not only slash greenhouse gas emissions but also improve health by cleaning up other dangerous air pollution. As you debate investments in infrastructure and consider the American Jobs Plan and American Families Plan, our organizations ask you to approve legislation to:

- **Invest in clean, non-combustion renewable energy.** A clean electricity standard that achieves 100% renewable electricity by 2035 and rapid reductions in natural gas and coal use are necessary to drive a nationwide transition to pollution-free sources like wind, solar, geothermal and tidal. To protect health equity, clean energy legislation should not include offset credits that would allow for increased pollution in communities already experiencing poor air quality.
- **Establish long-term clean energy tax incentives.** Paired with a clean electricity standard, ten-year tax incentives for clean electricity, energy storage, transmission will help drive innovation and deployment of pollution-free energy.
- **Rapidly transition to zero-emission vehicles, buses and ports.** Include historic investments in electric vehicles and buses and the necessary charging infrastructure. Specifically, please include \$40 billion in electric vehicle manufacturing, \$40 billion over the next decade in charging infrastructure, and at least \$20 billion to help transform the nation's diesel school bus fleet to electric, zero-emission buses. As part of a transition to a pollution-free transportation sector, include investments to electrify the nation's ports, which have some of the poorest air quality in the country.
- **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.

¹ American Lung Association. State of the Air. Apr 2021. www.lung.org/sota

Investing in infrastructure is an opportunity to protect health from climate change – 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,

Allergy & Asthma Network

Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments

American Heart Association

American Lung Association

American Psychological Association

American Public Health Association

American Thoracic Society

Arkansas Public Health Association

Association of Public Health Nurses

Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health

Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America

Children's Environmental Health Network

Climate Psychiatry Alliance

Colorado Public Health Association

Delaware Academy of Medicine/Delaware Public Health Association

Florida Public Health Association

Georgia Clinicians for Climate Action

Georgia Society for Public Health Education

Health by Design

Health Care Without Harm

Illinois Association of School Nurses

Illinois Public Health Association
Indiana Public Health Association
Interfaith Public Health Network
Kansas Public Health Association
Maine Public Health Association
Medical Society Consortium on Climate & Health
Medical Students for a Sustainable Future
Michigan Public Health Association
Missouri Public Health Association
Mothers & Others For Clean Air
National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
National Association of School Nurses
National Environmental Health Association
NC Public Health Association
Nevada Public Health Association
New Hampshire Public Health Association
New Jersey Association of Public Health Nurse Administrators
New Jersey Public Health Association
New Jersey Society for Public Health Education (NJSOPHE)
New York State Public Health Association
North Dakota Public Health Association
Oregon Public Health Association
Pennsylvania Public Health Association
Philippine Nurses Association of America

Physicians for Social Responsibility

Physicians for Social Responsibility/Florida

Preventive Cardiovascular Nurses Association

PSR Colorado

Public Health Institute

Respiratory Health Association

San Francisco Bay Physicians for Social Responsibility

Society for Public Health Education

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