
The Environmental Justice Forum on Climate Change



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Environmental Justice Organizations Initiate Campaign To Impact Climate Change Policy

Statement from the Environmental Justice Forum on Climate Change

As the U.S. Senate prepares to have a floor debate on climate change and we await the fall elections and a new administration, the *Environmental Justice Forum on Climate Change* declares our lack of faith that trading mechanisms can address the present and impending climate change crisis. Furthermore, because this is the most critical issue of our time we call for a democratic, dialogue on climate change inclusive of all communities and sectors of our economy, and we stand ready to work with all for real, effective and just climate action policies.

The Environmental Justice Forum on Climate Change is a coalition of Environmental Justice grassroots groups and activists. It is a coalition of those who will, and have already been, first impacted as well as worst impacted by climate change and environmental decision-making. Our coalition works with and within communities-of-color, Indigenous Peoples, and low-income -- organizing residents living in urban and rural communities across the country. These communities have perspectives that have been absent from the urgent, essential debate on climate change.

The EJ Forum on Climate change will educate and mobilize members, residents and policymakers to affect just policies and legislation that:

- **Achieve significant, identified reductions in carbon emissions**
- **Protect the most burdened and vulnerable communities**
- **Reduce co-pollutants (i.e. airborne particulate matter, sulfur dioxide nitrogen oxides and mercury) that negatively impact public health**
- **Promote the reduction of hotspot pollution in overburdened communities**
- **Offset higher energy costs to low-income consumers**
- **Transitions us from a fossil fuel economy ensuring just transition for workers**

We have come together over the past year as a coalition of environmental justice and grassroots organizations and activists to (1) participate in determining the future of our economy and our environment; (2) to challenge the cap and trade mechanism as an effective one for achieving our goals; and (3) to acknowledge and communicate the impacts that already New Orleans, the Gulf Coast and Alaska communities and Indigenous Peoples are experiencing.

There have been many winners and losers as our environment has been preserved, deteriorated and enhanced. As a nation, we cannot embark on climate action legislation and policies anchored by the notion that there will always be winners and losers as we have heard some say apologetically. We have the vision, commitment and opportunity to lift all boats.

From the communities of Oakland to New York, from the farms and bayous of the Deep South to indigenous communities in the Southwest and Alaska, we have spent years winning victories, reforming policy as we work to protect the health and environment of our communities. Some of us have worked over decades and have developed climate justice principles as members of the Environmental Justice Climate Change Initiative and others are new committed social justice activists, all working to transform the environmental decision making and policy paradigm that results in communities of color and low-income that are disproportionately burdened by pollution and resulting health disparities.

Action is needed now to create a just climate action policy that protects communities, workers and the environment. It will take all of our efforts to positively transform the political will of the grassroots and grasstops. The Forum will offer, over the next few months, a series of policy papers and convenings to communicate and share our vision and our specific concerns. We are mobilizing the communities we work with to support, develop and implement effective climate and energy policies and to promote the opportunities for a more sustainable and healthy social and economic environment.

Together we can meet the challenge of developing a just climate action policy. We the undersigned urge all who read this statement to work with us to insure that our voices are part of creating a solution to the current climate crisis that protects all who live and work in this great country.