

September 24, 2021

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Ron Wyden
221 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Neal
372 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Majority Leader Schumer, Speaker Pelosi, Chairman Wyden and Chairman Neal,

While we applaud your effort to generate robust revenues to combat the urgency of climate change, the inclusion of a carbon tax in the Build Back Better Act would maintain a harmful status quo and fail to address the climate emergency. Instead of implementing a carbon tax, a repeal on domestic fossil fuel subsidies would provide a simpler and more robust revenue stream.

The Build Back Better Act is touted as the best shot to address the climate crisis, but it is also an opportunity to address the injustice and harms that fossil fuels bring to Black, Indigenous Nations and environmental justice communities. Including a carbon tax as a pay-for in this spending plan will further our dependency on fossil fuels and undermine efforts to eliminate and reduce pollution in vulnerable communities. Furthermore, this regressive tax will also undermine a key promise of President Biden to not raise taxes on people making under \$400,000 per year, an increase that will be felt hardest among low- and moderate-income households who are least equipped to make investments necessary to avoid carbon emissions and these new taxes.

Fossil fuel interests support a carbon tax because they know it will allow them to continue with business as usual, by merely paying a small tax to continue spewing airborne pollutants that significantly damage the health of disadvantaged communities while continuing to contribute to the ever-present climate emergency.

A carbon tax will also create more dependence on fossil fuels by connecting government funding to continuing pollution, which will make a transition off fossil fuels all the more challenging to accomplish as social programs will rely on revenue from pollution. This perverse relationship will cause us to choose between the health of vulnerable communities and our climate or funding government programs, a dichotomy we should avoid at all costs.

Therefore, the inclusion of a carbon tax would create an inequitable, discriminatory, ineffective and ultimately regressive proposal that gives a green light for the biggest climate scofflaws to pay to pollute and maintain a harmful status quo. We urge you to oppose a carbon tax and instead pursue other revenue streams to pay for critical infrastructure, such as eliminating fossil fuel subsidies.

Sincerely,

Climate Justice Alliance

Food & Water Watch

Indigenous Environmental Network

Our Revolution

Progressive Democrats of America