

March 15, 2022

The Honorable Joseph Biden  
President of the United States  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Secretary Jennifer Granholm  
U.S. Department of Energy  
1000 Independence Avenue SW  
Washington, DC 20585

Administrator Michael Regan  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20460

Chairman Richard Glick  
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission  
888 First Street NE  
Washington, DC 20426

Secretary Pete Buttigieg  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue SW  
Washington, DC 20590

Dear President Biden, Secretary Granholm, Administrator Regan, Secretary Buttigieg, and Chairman Glick:

The undersigned individuals and organizations represent communities that are disproportionately and adversely affected by oil and gas industry operations. Today, we write to express our deep concern with the growing adverse public health impacts and economic instability resulting from liquified natural gas (LNG) production and exports, and their burdens on frontline and environmental justice communities. We urge you to take decisive and urgent actions within your respective authority to halt the production and build out of LNG facilities to protect people, stabilize energy prices, and address climate change.

Despite the fact that Congress only lifted export restrictions in December 2015, the US is already set to be the world's largest LNG exporter by the end of 2022, years ahead of schedule.<sup>1</sup> Additionally, there are more than 20 new or expanded gas export terminals proposed in the United States, mostly on the Gulf Coast of Texas and Louisiana.<sup>2</sup> With LNG having a comparable or even more extensive climate footprint than coal, this skyrocketing trend in US exports jeopardizes our chances to meet national and international goals to limit warming to 1.5°C. Indeed, the World Energy Outlook 2021 from the International Energy Agency concluded that meeting international climate goals requires that "no new [gas] fields or export projects are developed, and natural gas prices fall to the marginal cost of delivering LNG from existing and under-construction projects."<sup>3</sup>

Proposed plans to expand LNG export terminals in the next few years are a massive step in the wrong direction for climate, but they will also perpetuate the racially and economically disproportionate cumulative impacts of pollution and the associated health burdens for residents, especially in the Gulf Coast region. The climate crisis is centered in areas of low income, communities of color, and Indigenous and tribal lands in large part, because the fossil fuel industry consistently treats these communities as sacrifice zones. Gas facilities and infrastructure, which the industry sites in these communities, emit highly potent climate polluting methane gas along with dangerous air pollution such as volatile organic compounds, nitrogen oxides, and benzene. Study after study show that communities living in proximity to oil and gas

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cnn.com/2022/01/05/energy/us-lng-exports/index.html>

<sup>2</sup> <https://cms.ferc.gov/media/north-american-lng-export-terminals-existing-approved-not-yet-built-and-proposed-3>

<sup>3</sup> <https://iea.blob.core.windows.net/assets/4ed140c1-c3f3-4fd9-acae-789a4e14a23c/WorldEnergyOutlook2021.pdf>

facilities are adversely affected by an array of adverse negative health impacts: asthma, lung and cardiovascular disease, cancer, preterm births, and premature deaths.<sup>45</sup>

LNG exports also are causing a rapid surge in domestic energy prices and reaping enormous profits for the US fossil fuel industry. We are experiencing colder than average temperatures this winter, and households nationwide are expected to spend 30% more for gas to heat their homes.<sup>67</sup> Even prior to the COVID-19 induced economic recession, American families struggled to pay their energy bills — particularly those in under-resourced, Black, Latino/a/x, and Indigenous households.<sup>8</sup> The growth of LNG exports exacerbates the economic hardships and adverse health impacts associated with these high energy burdens, especially for low-income communities and people of color.

As energy prices rise and climate change impacts intensify, it is critical that we address our dependency on fossil fuels. According to the International Energy Agency, we need to phase out fossil fuel use and scale up renewable energy now to achieve net zero emissions by 2050.<sup>9</sup> We urge you to take the following actions to safeguard the most vulnerable communities, fulfill federal commitments to climate and environmental justice, and swiftly transition our energy economy to renewable sources:

- **President Biden should direct the Department of Energy (DOE) to use its regulatory authority to halt gas exports.** DOE must broaden the interpretation and scope of its public interest reviews to include the cumulative impacts of proposed exports on frontline communities, greenhouse gas emissions and other co-pollutants as well as domestic energy prices and other commodities. This should result in the revoking of previously authorized and denial of prospective LNG export applications that are inconsistent with the public interest, which will ultimately reduce exports and help stabilize energy prices for all American consumers.
- **The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) should embed climate and environmental justice in environmental and public interest reviews and stop LNG projects.** FERC has a proven track record of approving gas and LNG projects based on cursory impact analyses that are detrimental for the climate and compounds environmental and harms for frontline communities. The Commission's recent update of its natural gas policy certificate and interim greenhouse gas policy statement, which would incorporate environmental justice and climate impacts into project reviews, is a promising sign.<sup>10</sup> FERC must also ensure the Office of Public Participation facilitates robust input from adversely affected communities into Commission proceedings.
- **The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) must better engage in the permitting and environmental review processes at FERC and Department of Transportation (DOT) to block LNG export facilities or expansions.** EPA should actively engage and contribute to comprehensive climate and environmental impact reviews and ensure meaningful public participation, as required under the National Environmental Policy Act, to fully evaluate the impacts of gas and LNG projects on areas of low-income and

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<sup>4</sup> <https://pubs.acs.org/doi/10.1021/acs.est.1c04328>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.greenpeace.org/usa/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Fossil-Fuel-Racism.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.eia.gov/pressroom/releases/press488.php>

<sup>7</sup> <https://thehill.com/opinion/energy-environment/584778-exporting-gas-means-higher-monthly-energy-bills-for-american?rl=1>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.aceee.org/research-report/u2006>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.iea.org/reports/net-zero-by-2050>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.ferc.gov/news-events/news/ferc-updates-policies-guide-natural-gas-project-certifications>

communities of color. Moreover, EPA should act quickly to strengthen multi-pollutant standards under the Clean Air and Water Acts that would prevent approval of expansions or new sites and create the necessary conditions to ensure strict compliance or accelerate the shutting down of existing LNG terminals.

- **FERC and DOE should make concrete efforts to accelerate renewables and energy storage.** Both agencies have the authority to help transform the energy system to align with our national climate goals and invest in environmental justice communities. A recent study shows that the US can reliably meet its energy demand at low cost by 2050 with 100% wind, solar, water and storage.<sup>11</sup> Renewable energy and battery storage costs have dropped precipitously in recent years, already outcompeting gas, and usage can shield American families from the fluctuations of energy prices and high heating and cooling bills. We strongly recommend that DOE prioritize research and development of renewable energy and storage, including long-duration storage as well as investment in transmission development and grid resilience. FERC should also play its part in the ongoing clean energy transition by implementing reforms that will allow for transmission development and upgrades, support beneficial electrification, and ensure all can access renewable energy.
- **The White House should urge Congress to align with the Build Back Better domestic agenda by expanding and increasing federal funding for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) and Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP).** This will address the economic harms from LNG expansion, mitigating high energy burdens and delivering climate resilience and health benefits to low-income communities and communities of color. For decades, LIHEAP and WAP have assisted millions of low-moderate families access energy efficiency retrofits and weatherization, which helps reduce energy bills, supports resilience to extreme temperatures and weather events, improves air quality, and promotes healthy homes. However, these programs have been severely underfunded and heavily means tested while unawareness and barriers to household eligibility make LIHEAP and WAP unreachable to many more families. We applaud DOE's efforts to increase funding and improve WAP by expanding eligibility, making homes weatherization and electrification-ready, and providing workforce development initiatives.<sup>12</sup> The Senate should pass the Build Back Better Act to boost investments in home energy retrofits and electrification for low-income households. Congress should also pass recently introduced legislation, the Heat and Cooling Relief Act that would update and improve LIHEAP by expanding outreach and household eligibility and increasing funding for utility and heating and cooling assistance as well as weatherization under WAP, among others.<sup>13</sup>

The time is now to stop the build out of new and expanded LNG infrastructure and export terminals to curb rising domestic energy prices, stave off the most severe climate impacts, and to begin to address the injustices the fossil fuel industry has inflicted on low-income communities and communities of color. We look forward to working with the White House, DOE, DOT, EPA, and FERC to take these recommended actions and move the nation towards a just and equitable clean energy future for all.

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<sup>11</sup> <https://web.stanford.edu/group/efmh/jacobson/Articles/I/21-USStates-PDFs/21-USStatesPaper.pdf>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.energy.gov/articles/doe-announces-186-million-expand-weatherization-assistance-program>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/6437/actions?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%5B%22Heating+and+cooling%22%2C%22Heating%22%2C%22and%22%2C%22cooling%22%5D%7D&r=1&s=2>

Sincerely,

1-70 Citizens Advisory Group  
198 methods  
350 Deschutes  
350 Eugene  
350 Massachusetts  
350 New Hampshire  
350PDX  
Another Gulf Is Possible Collaborative  
Beyond Extreme Energy  
Citizens for Clean Air and Clean Water in  
Brazoria County  
Citizens for Renewables, Inc.  
Common Ground Community Trust  
Connecticut Coalition for Economic and  
Environmental Justice  
Deep South Center for Environmental Justice  
Flint Rising  
GreenFaith  
Healthy Gulf  
HBCU Climate Change Consortium  
Jesus People Against Pollution  
Just Transition Alliance  
Indigenous Life Ways  
Louisiana Bucket Brigade

Montbello Neighborhood Improvement  
Association  
Mothers Out Front Colorado  
New Energy Economy  
North American Climate, Conservation and  
Environment  
Partnership for Southern Equity  
Peak Plastic Foundation  
PODER  
Red Earth Descendants  
Rouge Climate  
Sisters Health & Wellness Collective  
Spirit of the Sun, Inc.  
South Bronx Unite  
Sunflower Alliance  
System Change not Climate Change  
Tallahassee Food Network, Inc.  
Terra Advocati  
Turtle Island Restoration Network  
Unite North Metro Denver  
WE ACT for Environmental Justice  
West End Revitalization Association  
Womxn from the Mountain  
Working for Racial Equity  
Zero Hour

*Supporters:*

Accelerate Neighborhood Climate Action  
Businesses for a Livable Climate  
Call to Action Colorado  
Capitol Heights Presbyterian  
CatholicNetwork US  
Colorado Businesses for a Livable Climate  
Community for Sustainable Energy  
Food and Water Watch  
FracTracker Alliance  
Greater New Orleans Housing Alliance  
Indivisible Ambassadors  
International Marine Mammal Project of Earth  
Island Institute  
Littleton Business Alliance  
Mayfair Park Neighborhood Association Board  
Mental Health and Inclusion Ministries

North Range Concerned Citizens  
Oil Change International  
Our Climate  
PEER/NYPAN Suffolk County  
Rainforest Action Network  
RapidShift Network  
Save EPA  
Small Business Alliance  
Southwest Organization for Sustainability  
Texas Campaign for the Environment  
The Green House Connection Center  
Wall of Women  
Western Environmental Law Center  
Western Slope Businesses for a Livable  
Climate

CC: The White House, Climate Policy Office  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
Members of Congress