

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 9, 2022

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

Dear President Biden,

We write to urge you to promptly release the first iteration of the landmark Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool, which the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) is developing, and which will provide badly needed information to government agencies about the effects of environmental harms on disadvantaged communities. As new funding from the *Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act* becomes available and as your Administration allocates other federal funding, an effective screening tool will play a critical role in tracking our country's progress on achieving your Justice40 agenda—ensuring the delivery of at least 40 percent of the overall benefits from federal investments in climate and clean energy to disadvantaged communities.¹

The catastrophic impacts of climate change are inextricably linked to health, economic, and racial injustice. Communities throughout the United States are facing powerful and frequent hurricanes, devastating wildfires, and tornadoes, but Black, Brown, and Indigenous communities face an extra burden: the burden of environmental racism. Pollution from fossil fuel extraction and combustion, toxic chemical spills, water contamination, and other environmental harms affect every facet of life for those exposed, from birth weight to educational outcomes. Historically, these communities also have been denied the resources needed to adapt to climate impacts, remediate past harms, and build a clean energy future. The Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool and the Justice40 initiative are key to addressing these inequities.

The swift release of a prototype will enable the CEQ to move forward in soliciting public comment and working with key stakeholders to improve the tool. With so much depending on the successful implementation of the Justice40 initiative, continuous engagement with stakeholders, advocates, and community experts is needed to deliver an effective tool that works for all. The public release of the tool is a key step in that consultative process.

In addition to implementing the *Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act*, federal agencies are instituting broad strategic plans that will depend upon a robust mapping, screening, and consultation framework. It is more urgent than ever that the federal government has a functional,

¹ Shalanda Young et al., *The Path to Achieving Justice40*, The White House (July 20, 2021), www.whitehouse.gov/omb/briefing-room/2021/07/20/the-path-to-achieving-justice40/.

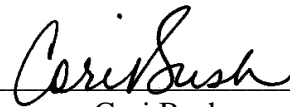
trustworthy, and transparent Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool in order to track and measure its progress in these areas.

We thank you for your promise on delivering environmental justice investments and are grateful for your Administration's historic focus on environmental justice issues. We urge you to release the Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool—which should precede a robust stakeholder engagement process—in order to fully map, measure, and monitor the needs and successes of environmental justice communities.

Sincerely,



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



Cori Bush
Member of Congress

/s/

Cory A. Booker
United States Senator

/s/

Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator

/s/

Thomas R. Carper
United States Senator

/s/

Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator

/s/

Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator

/s/

Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator

/s/

Alex Padilla
United States Senator

/s/

Bernard Sanders
United States Senator

/s/

Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator

/s/

Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator

/s/

Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator

/s/

Carolyn B. Maloney
Member of Congress

President Joseph R. Biden
February 9, 2022
Page 3 of 3

/s/
Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez
Member of Congress

/s/
Nanette Diaz Barragán
Member of Congress

/s/
Jamie Raskin
Member of Congress

/s/
Earl Blumenauer
Member of Congress

/s/
Mondaire Jones
Member of Congress

/s/
Lisa Blunt Rochester
Member of Congress

/s/
Marie Newman
Member of Congress

CC:
The Honorable Brenda Mallory, Chair of the Council on Environmental Quality