



Just Transition Alliance

Frontline workers, fence-line communities united for justice.

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July 29, 2022

The Honorable Raul Grijalva
Chairman
Natural Resources Committee
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Bruce Westerman
Ranking Member
Natural Resources Committee
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Grijalva and Ranking Member Westerman:

Our organization writes to offer our strong support for the Environmental Justice for All Act (H.R. 2021). We celebrate that this bill has moved past Committee and now urge the House of Representatives to quickly advance this important legislation to begin remedying the long history of environmental racism, injustice, and the cumulative and disproportionate health and environmental impacts that affect communities of color, low-income communities, and Indigenous people across the country.

We support this legislation as it codifies Executive Order 12898: Environmental Justice by making environmental justice a law. H.R. 2021 aligns with our mission and values. For 25 years, Just Transition Alliance (JTA) has served people of color, Indigenous people and low-income communities living under the threat of polluting industries, and workers in the service, energy, farmworker, and chemical sectors. We continue to fight for a shift toward a sustainable economy that does not compromise people and our environment but rather one driven by those who have historically worked and lived at the frontlines and on the fence-lines of unsustainable production.

Decades of research and evidence and the many, many testimonies by impacted people and communities themselves document a history of cumulative and disproportionate chemical hazards and egregious harm imposed on such communities; those who have developed and demanded solutions to these injustices for some time. The extensive public input process informing the Act's creation reflects this history and evidence and

has produced legislation uniquely influenced by the people and communities it seeks to help.

We strongly support the Act's central elements and consider them to be important steps toward remedying a long legacy of damage to our communities' health and quality of life; legislation that aims to ensure the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of color, culture, national origin or income, with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of health and environmental laws, regulations and policies. These urgently needed policy improvements include:

- Strengthening the National Environmental Policy Act to ensure that communities have a meaningful opportunity to engage in NEPA processes that will impact them.
- Requiring federal agencies to consider cumulative health impacts under the Clean Air Act and Clean Water Act in making permitting decisions and ensuring that permits are only issued when there is a reasonable certainty of no harm to human health;
- Providing \$75 million in annual grants for research and program development to reduce health disparities; and improve public health in environmental justice communities;
- Restoring the Civil Rights Act to permit private citizens and organizations facing discrimination to seek legal remedies;
- Creating an energy transition economic development assistance fund—paid for through fees on oil, gas and coal companies—to support communities and workers as they transition away from greenhouse gas-dependent economies.

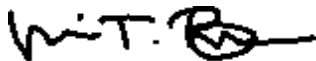
As the bill has moved past Committee, H.R. 2021 is an important step forward. However, it fails to address key issues that are critical for it to be truly effective and a means for holding Congress accountable to the communities the bill serves to protect. To that end, we urge the following amendments to H.R. 2021:

- Free Prior and Informed Consent by Indigenous and other frontline environmental justice communities to decide on new industrial infrastructure that threatens their lives and livelihoods.
- The impunity of the U.S. military and the Department of Homeland Security at the Mexico/U.S. border, whose production and subsequent pollution runs roughshod over communities of color and Indigenous communities.

- In a further step beyond our [April 2020 lawsuit](#) against the Trump Administration for its “[Dereliction of Duty](#)” where it relaxed enforcement of the U.S.’s environmental protections due to the COVID-19 pandemic and where Congress did not pursue action, we further demand safeguards from any of the federal government’s attempts to avoid protecting our communities during natural/unnatural catastrophes.

The Environmental Justice for All Act is a long overdue correction to our nation’s failed chemical management policies and the cumulative hazards and disproportionate harms that have egregiously impacted communities of color, low-income communities and Indigenous people. We urge the Committee to include our proposed amendments noted above and for Congressional members to begin to correct these injustices and address this legacy of harm by promptly passing the bill out of the House of Representatives and sending it on to the Senate.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "José T. Bravo". The signature is stylized and includes a circular mark at the end.

José T. Bravo
Executive Director