

October 20, 2021

The Honorable Senator Joe Manchin  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Manchin:

As religious leaders and people of faith in West Virginia we believe that we are called to speak up for those who are suffering and for those whose voices are not heard. It is in this spirit that we write in solidarity with those who are hit hardest by the effects of climate change, whether through severe weather events or through worsening air and water quality. We know that we have a moral responsibility to do what it takes to make these communities more climate resilient and to right the wrongs that made them vulnerable in the first place.

As we recover from the pandemic and look towards rebuilding, we must address climate change and seek to correct environmental injustice in our country. We urge you to pass legislation through the budget reconciliation process that achieves 100% renewable, pollution-free electricity by 2035, while also expanding investments in wind and solar power. As religious leaders, we urge you to acknowledge the suffering caused by climate change by enacting big and bold investments in:

- clean, renewable energy to modernize our electric grid
- electric vehicles, charging infrastructure and expanding public transit to electrify transportation and connect communities
- energy efficiency and affordable, energy-efficient housing

It is urgent that you enact legislation that offsets the disproportionate impact of climate change on frontline communities and helps those communities most vulnerable to climate-related weather events become more climate resilient. The budget reconciliation package should direct a significant portion of investments to Black, Indigenous, people of color and low-income communities to offset the unequal burden of pollution they have shouldered. In addressing the climate crisis, any legislation should provide the financial support needed to equip all communities for a major energy transition so they no one is left behind to suffer further harm and injury.

When faced with a crisis, we are forced to decide whether or not we will hear and answer the cry of those most impacted or whether we would rather preserve the status quo at all costs. Your work to create and negotiate a bold reconciliation package centered on climate and justice is a sign that we are not afraid of change in favor of a better future that includes everyone. We pray

for your commitment to reimagining and rebuilding our society in this critical moment in our nation's history.

Sincerely,

Rev. Jeff Allen  
Executive Director  
West Virginia Council of Churches

Jean Ambrose  
Clerk of Mid Ohio Valley Friends Meeting  
Parkersburg

Elizabeth Bailes  
West Virginia Conference of United Methodist Women  
Ravenswood

Ibtesam Barazi  
Vice President  
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Donna Becher  
Past Chair, Catholic Committee of Appalachia and Member, Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church  
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Rev. Robin Blakeman,  
WV Interfaith Power and Light Steering Committee  
Huntington

Elizabeth Brunello  
American Friends Service Committee  
Charleston

Rev. Caitlin Cotter Coillberg  
Unitarian Universalist  
Charleston

Sue DeVall  
West Virginia Interfaith Power & Light Steering Committee  
Shepherdstown

Rev. Ronald English  
Former Pastor, First Baptist Church of Charleston  
Restorative Justice Facilitator, American Friends Service Committee  
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Martha Hill  
Justice and Advocacy Chair, West Virginia Conference of the United Methodist Church  
Charleston

Amy Jo Hutchinson  
Faith Democracy  
Wheeling

Angela Iafrate  
Catholic Committee of Appalachia-West Virginia  
Parkersburg

Karan Ireland  
Blessed Sacrament Parish  
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Bishop Michie Klusmeyer  
Diocese of West Virginia  
The Episcopal Church

Rev. William Myers  
First Presbyterian Church  
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Dr. Leah Rampy  
Church of the Wild Two Rivers  
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Lida Shepherd  
American Friends Service Committee Economic Justice Project  
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Rich Stonestreet  
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Catholics for a Sustainable Economy

Rabbi Victor Ureck  
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National Association of Social Workers and St. Peter Claver Catholic Church  
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Rick Wilson  
American Friends Service Committee  
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Loretta Young  
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