

**For Immediate Release:**

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**Environmentalists Urge Congress to Challenge Trump Agenda**

**Washington, DC** – 80 organizations sent a letter to Congress urging them to stand up to President Trump and challenge his anti-environment, pro-fossil fuel actions, including voting against the new tax bill.

The Trump administration has been taking aggressive action to roll back environmental protections and perpetuate, and even increase, the power of the fossil fuel industry. The letter, sent to all members of Congress, urges Congress to serve the best interests of the country and asks them to oppose actions by Donald Trump to advance legislation, regulations, policies and decisions that devastate our future.

It is imperative that Congress recognize the threats from the Trump administration's anti-clean energy actions, such as withdrawing from the Paris Climate Accord and removing the Department of Interior's moratorium on new coal mining on federal lands.

In part, the letter asks that Congressional members of conscience, regardless of their political affiliation, not allow Donald Trump to drive a political agenda of:

- increasing the political power of industry and corporate lobbyists,
- perpetuating and increasing our nation's dependence on dirty fossil fuels,
- advancing more pipelines and energy export facilities that are abusing communities, taking property rights, wrecking environments, and
- undermining the ability of the clean energy industry to generate sustainable jobs while stimulating a healthy habitat.

This letter was submitted by the organizations to coincide with the tax bill debates. The proposed bill includes language that delivers major blows to clean energy, including opening Alaska's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to drilling.

“Communities across our nation are already suffering from environmental degradation, so much so that a recent [UN investigator expressed shock](#) at seeing such significant levels of environmental devastation in any first world country, let alone the United States. The eyes of the world, of history and of future generations are watching with horror as Congress allows Donald Trump to advance his devastating environmental agenda. It is time for Congress and every one of its members to stand up for protection of the natural resources that are essential to us all, clean water; clean air; healthy soils to grow healthy foods; healthy forests, wetlands, plant and wildlife communities,” said Maya van Rossum, the Delaware Riverkeeper, leader of the Delaware Riverkeeper Network and author of a new book titled *The Green Amendment*, which advances the idea of constitutional level protection for the environment.

“Without a doubt, Donald Trump and his administration are a clear and present danger to our already-stressed climate and environment. His policies since taking office, across the board, have been to the benefit of powerful oil, gas and coal CEO's and inimical to the interests of everybody else. His is a government of, by and for the polluting and greedy 1%. A tax bill passed on his watch in collaboration with only Republicans in Congress

would be a loser for the American people and the earth. Where are the Republican Congresspeople with a conscience? They seem to be going the way of the world's rapidly-shrinking coral reefs and glaciers," said Ted Glick, Organizer with Beyond Extreme Energy.

"The Trump administration's environmental agenda puts humanity at risk in ways it will be very difficult, if not impossible to walk back in the next administration. We get no do-overs once we've pushed the planet over the climate precipice. Our system of checks and balances was designed to protect us from a rogue characters operating out of ignorance and greed. Congress has a mandate to put a check on Trump's recklessness," said Karen Feridun, Founder, Berks Gas Truth.

To read the full letter, visit <http://bit.ly/lettertocongress>.

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**Delaware Riverkeeper Network ~ Berks Gas Truth**  
**Beyond Extreme Energy ~ Sustainable Medina County ~ SCRAM**  
**OVEC-Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition**  
**Green Sanctuary at the Unitarian Church of Barnstable ~ Mason Pipeline Committee**  
**Greenville New Hampshire Pipeline Resistance ~ Popular Resistance**  
**350 Mass Cape Cod ~ Breathe Easy Susquehanna County**  
**ECHO Action & NH Pipeline Resistance ~ Occupy Bergen County**  
**Gas Free Seneca ~ Seneca Lake Guardian, A Waterkeeper Affiliate**  
**Catskill Citizens for Safe Energy ~ Roseland Against Compressor Station (RACS)**  
**Greenvest ~ CDL Consulting ~ Howard County Climate Action**  
**Homeowners Against Land Taking (HALT) ~ DiBianca Associates LLC**  
**New Mexico Story Power ~ Schuylkill Pipeline Awareness**  
**Clean Water Action ~ Altamaha Riverkeeper**  
**Visualizing Pipeline Impacts ~ Earth Action, Inc.**  
**Milford Doers/Residents of Crumhorn Mountain**  
**PAUSE - People of Albany United for Safe Energy**  
**Virginia Citizens Consumer Council ~ New Progressive Alliance**  
**StopNED ~ Union County (NJ) Peace Council ~ Resist the Pipeline**  
**Elmira and Friends Against Fracking ~ Durham CCAP**  
**Environment New Jersey ~ Bucks County CCAP**  
**Sullivan Alliance for Sustainable Development**  
**Preserve Montgomery County Virginia ~ Green America**  
**Pennsylvania Alliance for Clean Water and Air**  
**Center for Biological Diversity ~ Bold Alliance ~ Advocates for Springfield, NY**  
**The Green Sanctuary Committee, Community Church of New York, UU**  
**New Jersey Tenants Organization ~ Cook Inletkeeper**  
**Orange Residents Against Pilgrim Pipelines ~ 350 Loudoun**  
**New Hampshire Pipeline Awareness ~ Damascus Citizens for Sustainability**  
**Catskill Mountainkeeper ~ Citizens for Water**  
**Aquashicola/Pohopoco Watershed Conservancy ~ NYH2o**  
**Monmouth County Democratic Progressive Caucus ~ Citizens for Clean Water**  
**Already Devalued and Devastated Homeowners of Parsippany**  
**Northjersey Pipeline Walkers ~ Stop the Algonquin Pipeline Expansion**  
**Chris Dennis Environment Foundation ~ Bus For Progress**  
**Committee to Preserve the Finger Lakes ~ Citizens Coalition for a Safe Community**  
**Coalition to Protect New York ~ Coalition Against the Pilgrim Pipeline (CAPP)**  
**Protect Our Water Heritage Rights ~ Compressor Free Franklin**  
**Franciscan Response to Fracking ~ People Demanding Action**  
**Pequannock Seniors/Indivisible ~ Sustainable Loudoun**  
**SEED (Securing Economic and Energy Democracy) for SW NM**  
**Guardians of the Brandywine ~ Our Revolution New Mexico**  
**Frack Free Four Corners ~ Sustainable Tompkins**

December 18, 2017

Dear members of Congress,

Donald Trump has been in office for less than a year and already his presidency is steeped in controversy from mounting evidence and seeming admissions of obstruction of justice to credible and increasing claims of sexual assault to legitimate questions about whether the decisions made and actions taken are to serve the goals of foreign leaders or Trump's own family at the expense of U.S. citizens, communities and constitutional rights.

As the country grapples with the administration's wrongdoing and how to address it, Trump has been taking aggressive action to roll back important environmental protections and perpetuate, and even increase, the power of the fossil fuel industry. His actions will only exacerbate the climate crisis we face and threaten the future of the earth.

Members of Congress of conscience, regardless of their political affiliation, should not allow Donald Trump to drive a political agenda of:

- increasing the political power of industry and corporate lobbyists,
- perpetuating and increasing our nation's dependence on dirty fossil fuels,
- advancing more pipelines and energy export facilities that are abusing communities, taking property rights, wrecking environments, and
- undermining the ability of the clean energy industry to generate sustainable jobs while stimulating a healthy habitat.

We appeal to all members of Congress to recognize the threats that the Trump agenda poses to our national security and our very ability to survive. We are at the nexus of environmental disaster and political chaos. Congress has an obligation to serve the best interests of our republic and must oppose actions by Donald Trump to advance legislation, regulations, policies and decisions that devastate our future.

In the past year, Donald Trump and his administration have advanced a series of actions and decisions, which will have devastating impacts on our environment, on U.S. citizens, communities, jobs, future generations and the future of our earth. Here is but a short list of concerning actions and decisions taken:

- ⇒ Advanced a Tax Plan that calls for fossil fuel drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to pay for the tax cuts that benefit the wealthiest among us as well as corporations already flush with cash;
- ⇒ Advanced a Tax Proposal that would partially or completely roll back tax breaks meant to encourage wind and solar development;
- ⇒ Signed executive order to advance approval of the Keystone XL and Dakota Access oil Pipelines;
- ⇒ Suspended a study of health risks on residents who live near mountain top removal coal mine sites;
- ⇒ Repealed anti-corruption rule that required energy companies to disclose payments to foreign governments;
- ⇒ Instructed the EPA to rewrite the 'water of the United States' rule in ways that reduce environmental protection;
- ⇒ Instructed the EPA to stop collecting methane emissions data from around 15,000 oil and gas operations, under the advisement of industry;

⇒ Instructed EPA to roll back fuel efficiency standards that are designed to push down greenhouse gases and other pollutant declaring they are too “costly for automakers”;

⇒ Denied a bid to halt the use of harmful pesticides that EPA scientists identified as being harmful to public health;

⇒ Rolled back limits on toxic discharges, including arsenic, lead, and mercury, from power plants into public water;

⇒ Placed a 2 year pause on regulations that would reduce emission leaks from oil and gas operators, despite regulator acknowledgement that the pollution leaks result in “disproportionate” harm to children ;

⇒ Canceled rule to protect whales and turtles from Fishing Nets

⇒ Took action to shrink Bears Ears and Grand Staircase Monuments and thereby opening the door for fossil fuel development;

⇒ Decreasing the EPA’s budget by 31%, which will result in the elimination of programs to restore the Great Lakes, Chesapeake Bay, and Puget Sound. As well as end the EPA’s lead-risk reduction and radon detection programs and cut funds for the Superfund cleanup program;

⇒ Signed joint resolution passed by Congress revoking the U.S, Department of Interior’s “Stream Protection Rule” that placed stricter restrictions on dumping mining waste into surrounding waterways;

⇒ Withdrew from the Paris Climate Deal;

⇒ Signed an executive order fast-tracking approval for “high priority infrastructure projects.” Any governor or Cabinet secretary may ask for a project to be designated as high-priority if approved by the chairman of the White House Council on environmental Quality, the project will go to the front of the line for any agency required to review and approve it;

⇒ Nominated Robert Powelson, member of Pennsylvania’s Public Utility Commission during the period of rapid natural gas development in Pennsylvania and Neil Chatterjee, an energy policy adviser to US Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, and Kevin McIntyre an attorney who has represented fossil fuel and utility interests for FERC;

⇒ Signed an executive order reviewing any actions in the past decade that expanded existing national marine sanctuaries or established new ones and may have interfered with potential gas and oil development or mineral extraction;

⇒ Instructed the Department of the Interior to review and possibly repeal safety and enforcement standards that protect over 40 national parks from impacts of oil and gas drilling including the Everglades, Grand Teton, and Mesa Verde;

⇒ Directed the EPA to withdraw and rewrite rules that mandate power plants limit carbon dioxide, including new rules promulgated under the Clean Air Act;

⇒ Ordered the Attorney General’s office to stop defending certain measures that would reduce coal plan pollution;

⇒ Withdrawing regulations that require government agencies to consider the effects of climate change when deciding whether to issue permits for fossil fuel production or infrastructure projects such as pipelines;

⇒ Dismantled hydraulic fracking rules from BLM that improved safety standards for hydraulic fracturing wells and ensured contaminated wastewater is appropriately stored and required drilling companies to disclose when they are using toxic chemicals;

⇒ Repeal previous executive orders on climate change that were designed to help prepare the US for impacts of climate change including floods, rising seas, prolonged heat waves, and wildfires;

⇒ Removed Department of Interior’s moratorium on new Coal mining on federal lands;

⇒ Withdrew a rule that would help consumers buy more fuel-efficient tires;

⇒ Overturned a ban on the hunting of predators in Alaskan wildlife refuges.

We are all left to ask the important question “why”. Why has Donald Trump taken these devastating steps and why is Congress not speaking up and speaking out to try and stop him?

Again, we appeal to all members of Congress to:

- recognize the threats that the Trump agenda poses to our national security and our very ability to survive; and
- to serve the best interests of our republic by opposing the actions of Donald Trump to advance legislation, regulations, policies and decisions that devastate our future.

Urgently Requested by:

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Susan Starkey, Member, Green Sanctuary at the Unitarian Church of Barnstable

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Margaret Flowers, Co-director, Popular Resistance

Lisa Coedy, Coordinator, 350 Mass Cape Cod

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Stephanie Scherr, Director, ECHO Action & NH Pipeline Resistance

Sally Jane Gellert, Member, Committee on Correspondence, Occupy Bergen County

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Joseph Campbell, President, Seneca Lake Guardian, A Waterkeeper Affiliate

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Jen Hilburn, Executive Director, Altamaha Riverkeeper

Jess Irish, Co-Director, Visualizing Pipeline Impacts

Mary Gutierrez, Executive Director, Earth Action, Inc.

Otto Butz, Founder, Milford Doers/Residents of Crumhorn Mountain

Diana Wright, Facilitator, PAUSE - People of Albany United for Safe Energy

Irene Leech, President, Virginia Citizens Consumer Council

Ed Griffith, Liaison Officer, New Progressive Alliance

Cathy Kristofferson, Co-founder, StopNED

Diane, Chair, Union County (NJ) Peace Council

James Michel, Co-founder, Resist the Pipeline

Doug Couchon, Co-founder, Elmira and Friends Against Fracking

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Arianne Elinich, Founder, Bucks County CCAP

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Jean Su, Associate Conservation Director, Center for Biological Diversity  
Hannah Adams, Deputy Director, Bold Alliance  
Tara Sumner, Vice President, Advocates for Springfield, NY  
Gusti Bogok, Chair, The Green Sanctuary Committee, Community Church of New York, UU  
Matt Shapiro, President, New Jersey Tenants Organization  
Bob Shavelson, Inletkeeper, Cook Inletkeeper  
Sandra Kissam, Chair, Orange Residents Against Pilgrim Pipelines  
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B. Arrindell, Director, Damascus Citizens for Sustainability  
Wes Gillingham, Associate Director, Catskill Mountainkeeper  
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Peter Gamba, President, Committee to Preserve the Finger Lakes  
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