

February 9, 2022

Dear Members of Congress:

As health organizations, we represent physicians, nurses, mental health professionals, public health and health care professionals, health scientists and researchers, patients and advocates all dedicated to promoting health and saving lives. Climate change is a health emergency. Addressing it by transitioning the nation to clean, renewable electricity and clean transportation will avoid the worst health impacts of climate change and achieve immediate improvements in air quality and health at the same time. That is why our groups strongly support the climate provisions included in the House-passed Build Back Better Act. As negotiations continue, we are asking Congress to ensure that the investments in the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution listed below are passed into law.

Air pollution and climate change are impacting the health of millions of Americans now, and the passage of Build Back Better into law is crucial for mitigating worse impacts in the future. Emissions from fossil fuel or other combustion-based operations are worsening air quality, which is especially harmful for children, seniors, pregnant people, people with respiratory illnesses and people who work or play outside. These same emissions are also driving climate change and with it, sweeping and dramatic health harms. More intense and frequent wildfires, strong storms and persistent extreme heat are already causing physical and mental harm.

As a result of numerous current and legacy racist policies and practices, people of color are disproportionately more likely to have multiple pre-existing health conditions, to face social disadvantages and environmental risks that make them more vulnerable to climate change. Communities of color are also three times more likely than white communities to live in areas experiencing the worst air pollution.<sup>1</sup>

We appreciate and the House passage of the Build Back Better Act and the months of negotiations that led to this point. We also understand that changes will need to be made to the House-passed bill as it moves through the Senate. We urge you to recognize the urgency of climate action and to include the following provisions:

- Establish long-term clean energy tax incentives. Ten-year tax incentives for clean electricity, energy storage and transmission will help drive innovation and deployment of pollution-free energy, and the inclusion of these tax incentives in the final bill will represent a large portion of the emissions reductions needed to reduce climate-warming greenhouse gas emissions 50% by 2030.
- Rapidly transition to zero-emission vehicles and technology. The transportation sector is the largest contributor to greenhouse gases and a significant source of air pollution. Making it easier to purchase electric vehicles, including medium- and heavy-duty vehicles, through tax credits and incentives, paired with investments in the necessary charging infrastructure to support them, will have immediate health benefits by way of reductions in air pollution and long-term benefits by reducing climate pollution.
- Commit to environmental justice by ensuring 40% of investments in clean air go to frontline communities. Any efforts to reduce air and climate pollutants should not worsen existing inequities and should direct benefits to the communities that have been disproportionately burdened by air pollution and climate change.

Investing in efforts to reduce climate change is an opportunity to protect both physical and mental health– particularly for underserved communities – that Congress and the nation can't afford to miss. The below organizations urge swift and bold investments towards a healthier future.

Sincerely,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> American Lung Association. State of the Air. Apr 2021. www.lung.org/sota

Allergy & Asthma Network Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments American Academy of Pediatrics American College of Physicians American Lung Association American Psychological Association American Public Health Association American Thoracic Society Arkansas Public Health Association Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America Children's Environmental Health Network Climate for Health **Climate Psychiatry Alliance Colorado Public Health Association** Delaware Academy of Medicine / Delaware Public Health Association Health Care Without Harm Illinois Association of School Nurses Illinois Public Health Association Indiana Public Health Association Interfaith Public Health Network Maine Public Health Association Medical Students for a Sustainable Future National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners National Association of School Nurses

National Birth Equity Collaborative National Environmental Health Association National Hispanic Medical Association National League for Nursing NC Public Health Association Nevada Public Health Association New Jersey Local Boards of Health Association New Jersey Public Health Association New York State Public Health Association NJSOPHE North Dakota Public Health Association Pennsylvania Public Health Association Philippine Nurses Association of America Physicians for Social Responsibility Preventive Cardiovascular Nurses Association PSR Colorado **Public Health Institute Respiratory Health Association** San Francisco Bay Physicians for Social Responsibility Tennessee Public Health Association Utah Public Health Association Washington Physicians for Social Responsibility Washington State Public Health Association Wisconsin Health Professionals for Climate Action Wisconsin Public Health Association