

The Honorable Charles Schumer  
Senate Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
322 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington DC 20510

CC: Chairwoman Stabenow, Chairman Sanders

Dear Senator Schumer,

The undersigned organizations wish to express their deep concern about the factory farm incentives included in the Build Back Better Act, and urge you to reject the manure digester and Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO) incentives outlined below in the final Bill and to prioritize funding farm practices that build healthy soils.

CAFOs are an extractive, exploitative, and unsustainable model for American agriculture. Already, factory farms receive immense financial support through government subsidies and enjoy a lack of regulatory oversight. CAFOs and factory farms are not part of the climate solution and have no place in the Build Back Better Act. CAFOs pollute our climate and the environment, threaten public health, and disproportionately harm BIPOC communities. If the majority is to be the party of working-class families and revitalizing the US economy, advocating for incentives that would exacerbate the harms caused by CAFOs and other factory farms would be grossly misguided.

CAFOs fuel the climate crisis. The Build Back Better Act that passed the House of Representatives would substantially incentivize building CAFO methane digesters. A CAFO houses thousands of animals and collects their urine and manure in large pits located either under the CAFO building or in a nearby lagoon. The liquid waste releases methane as it decomposes, which is then burned for energy. This type of methane capture is falsely labeled as a “renewable energy” source as liquid manure emits [more methane than solid manure in a dry lot or on pasture](#). Methane, a greenhouse gas, is 84 times more potent than carbon dioxide over a twenty year time frame. Manure digesters require a scale of thousands of animals to operate, causing [further expansion of CAFOs](#) and their greenhouse gas emissions, as well as displacement of small and medium-sized farmers across the nation. For example, manure digesters for dairies require thousands of animals to operate efficiently. Investing in manure digesters comes with the unacceptable trade-off of harming the surrounding communities by expanding the factory farms that are destroying their quality of life.

Congress should be finding solutions that reduce reliance on a supply chain that creates liquid manure and methane, not patching together harmful remedies that prop up factory farms. The Build Back Better Act prioritizes building resilient human infrastructure and combating the climate crisis -- CAFOs are antithetical to both.

CAFOs are extremely detrimental to local air and water quality, as well as the broader environment. While methane may seem like an abstract threat, your friends, neighbors, and constituents suffer directly from the many other polluting impacts of CAFOs. [Drinking water](#), especially in rural areas, is likely to be contaminated with nitrates and bacteria from CAFO-sourced manure after running off from fields and into local waterways and drinking wells. The

[Environmental Protection Agency has long cautioned that CAFOs are a leading contributor to dangerously high levels of toxic particles in water](#), leading to fish kills and polluted drinking water.

CAFOs and factory farms jeopardize public health. In 2019, the [American Public Health Association called for a precautionary moratorium on new and expanding CAFOs](#). Workers and neighboring residents of CAFOs are [at a higher risk of developing asthma, allergies, and decreased lung function](#) than those who do not live by CAFOs. Over [150 pathogens can be found in manure from CAFOs](#) causing serious diseases in humans, such as Anthrax, Leptospirosis, Listeriosis, Salmonella poisoning, Giardiasis, and many others. Health risks are greater for children and those who are immunocompromised. The [World Health Organization](#), [Centers for Disease Control](#) and [Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations](#) have warned that humans are also at ever-higher health risks because CAFOs create superbugs by increasingly relying on antibiotics to control diseases in animals, so much so that the microbes being controlled develop immunity to the drugs and mutate. As such, CAFOs create microbes that infect humans, and are resistant to life-saving antibiotics used by medical professionals.

CAFOs are a tool of environmental racism and injustice. CAFOs tend to be built in and around communities with the least financial and political resources to fight back against the extractive operations. In many parts of the country, this tends to be in Black communities with histories of enslaved labor and sharecropping. In North Carolina, [CAFOs were 5 times more likely to be located in majority non-white communities and 7 times more likely in high-poverty areas](#). Workers in CAFOs tend to be immigrants and [face grueling working conditions](#). Communities of all affluence levels tend to oppose proposed CAFO sites, so the intentional placement in BIPOC and low-wealth communities is an environmental injustice that must be ended -- not perpetuated by the Build Back Better Act.

CAFOs are a driving factor of an unjust food system that pollutes the environment, threatens human health, and perpetuates systemic racism and inequity. They have no role in the Build Back Better Act. CAFO operators already enjoy many incentives and do not need another program built from funds meant to support working families. Furthermore as written the bill would allow factory farms to stack incentives essentially encouraging a CAFO boom across the country. The House-passed BBB includes the following incentives:

- A set-aside for “underutilized technology” (which is likely to primarily fund manure digesters) in new grant funding for the Rural Energy for America Program (REAP);
- Expanded eligibility for the 30% renewable energy tax credit to offset upfront costs associated with building digester systems, including manure digesters; and
- An additional \$9 Billion in funds for USDA’s Environmental Quality Incentives Program without proper guardrails to restrict this funding from going to support manure digesters for CAFOs instead of other more beneficial practices that would contribute to diversified and equitable climate-friendly food production.

Further incentivizing CAFOs would be misguided and firmly against the best interests of Americans. In 2019, the Center for Livable Future at Johns Hopkins University [published poll results of likely voters](#) in heavy CAFO states who strongly favored moratoriums on new CAFOs. Factory farms would not be viable without the federal subsidies they rely on, the lack of regulatory oversight they enjoy, and the political power of the corporations that profit from them. CAFOs are not the first choice of voters, farmers, consumers, or even the free market -- but

rather the product of corporate food giants that make their money from exploitation, often aided by government support.

We, the undersigned organizations, urge that you reject any new CAFO incentives in the forthcoming draft of the Build Back Better Act to be voted on in the Senate.

Sincerely,

350 Eugene	CA Businesses for a Livable Climate
350 Hawaii	Call to Action Colorado
350 Seattle	Campaign for Family Farms and the Environment
350 Triangle	CatholicNetworkUS
350 Wenatchee	Catskill Mountainkeeper
50by40	Center for Arkansas Farms and Food
ActionAid USA	Center for Biological Diversity
Advancing Collective Equity	Center for Food Safety
ADVOCACY COLLABORATIVE	Centralas Wine LLC
Agrarian Food Web LLC	Chicago Food Policy Action Council
Alaska Community Action on Toxics	Chilis on Wheels
All Together Now Pennsylvania	Clean and Healthy New York
Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments	CleanAirNow
American Grassfed Association	Climate Hawks Vote
American Sustainable Business Network	Climate Justice Alliance
Animal Legal Defense Fund	Climate Reality Project Silicon Valley
Animal Legal Defense Legislative Fund	CO Businesses for a Livable Climate
Animal Legal Society (VLS)	Coming Clean
Animals Are Sentient Beings, Inc	Compassion in World Farming USA
Applecroft Farm	Concerned citizen
Arkansas Ozark Waterkeeper	Dakota Rural Action
Assateague Coastal Trust	DC Greens
Balanced	Earth Action, Inc.
Be Well with Brialle and The Black Women's	Earth Action, Inc.
Healing Haven	Eating Animals Causes Pandemics
Beyond Pesticides	Encompass
Big Reuse	Environment America
Bionutrient Food Association	Environmental Justice Ministry Cedar Lane
Black Veg Society	Unitarian Universalist Church
Black VegFest	Extinction Rebellion San Francisco Bay Area
Bothered Earth, LLC	Factory Farming Awareness Coalition
Breakthrough Strategies and Solutions	Fair World Project
Bright Building LLC	Family Farm Action
Brighter Green	Family Farm Defenders
Broad Riverkeeper	Farm Aid
Buffalo River Watershed Alliance	Farm Forward
Businesses for a Livable Climate	

Farmworker Association of Florida  
Food & Water Watch  
Food Animal Concerns Trust  
Food as Medicine Nutrition Counseling  
Food Revolution Network  
Friends of the Earth  
Friends of Family Farmers  
Gladney Farm  
Good Omand Farm  
Good Stewards  
Government Accountability Project Food  
Integrity Campaign  
Grassroots Environmental Education  
Green Education and Legal Fund  
Green Sanctuary committee of the Unitarian-  
Universalist Church of Silver Spring  
Green State Solutions  
Green Village Communications  
Greenpeace USA  
Grow For Food  
Gulf Coast Center for Law & Policy  
Hawai'i Alliance for Progressive Action (HAPA)  
Hebbard Fence, LLC  
Hedgerow Hill Farm, LLC  
Hip Hop is Green  
Hudson Varick Resources  
Humane Society International  
Humane Society Legislative Fund  
Humane Society of the United States  
Humane Society Veterinary Medical Association  
Hungry Bear Farm  
I-70 Citizens Advisory Group  
Indigenous Environmental Network  
Indivisible Ambassadors  
Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy  
Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement  
Jefferson County Farmers & Neighbors, Inc.  
Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future  
JSA Sustainable Wealth Management  
Just Transition Alliance  
Kickapoo Peace Circle  
Kitchen Dwellers, LLC  
Kitchen Sync Strategies  
Land Stewardship Project

LEAD for Pollinators, Inc.  
Lean and Green Kids  
Let's Green CA!  
Locust Point Community Garden  
Long Beach Alliance for Clean Energy  
Los Jardines Institute  
Loudoun Climate Project  
Maryland Pesticide Education Network  
Mercy For Animals  
MiCCA  
Michigan Organic Food and Farm Alliance  
Mid-Ohio Valley Climate Action  
Milwaukee Riverkeeper  
Montbello Neighborhood Improvement  
Association  
MOSA Certified Organic  
MountainTrue  
National Family Farm Coalition  
National Farm to School Network  
National Farm Worker Ministry  
National Latino Farmers & Ranchers Trade  
Association  
Navitas Organics  
NC Climate Justice Collective  
NC Clinicians for Climate Action  
Neighboring Food Co-op Association  
Non Toxic Communities  
North Range Concerned Citizens  
Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance  
Northeast Organic Farming Association of New  
York  
Northeast Organic Farming Association of  
Vermont  
Northeast Organic Farming Association-  
Interstate Council  
Northern Plains Resource Council  
NWI Food Council  
NYCLASS (New Yorkers for Clean, Livable, and  
Safe Streets)  
Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association  
Organic Seed Growers and Trade Association  
Our Climate  
Our Climate Education Fund  
Pasture Raised Foods

PDA Arizona  
People & Pollinators Action Network  
Pesticide Action Network  
Planetary CARE  
Planetphilia  
Plant Powered Metro New York  
PlantPure Communities  
Princeton Student Climate Initiative  
ProVeg International  
ProVeg USA  
PSR Arizona  
Public Justice  
RapidShift Network  
Reach Out America  
Real Food Media  
Regenerative Organic Alliance  
Regenerative Rising  
ReKaivery Inc.  
Renewable Rikers  
Representing myself  
Residents Allied for the Future of Tioga (RAFT)  
Resource Renewal Institute  
River Guardian Foundation  
Rockland Farm Alliance  
Rural Coalition  
Rx4vida  
Santa Cruz Climate Action Network  
Savory Institute  
SCCAN  
Science and Environmental Health Network  
SEE-LA (Social Eco Education)  
SEED: Strategies for Ethical and Environmental  
Development, Inc.  
Seeding Sovereignty  
Sierra Harvest  
Slow Food USA  
Slow Food Youth Network USA  
Small Business Alliance  
Socially Responsible Agriculture Project  
Sonoma Hot Sauce  
STEAM URBAN  
Stone Soup Garden  
Stonewall farm  
Stop SPOT & Gulflink

Stop the Algonquin Pipeline Expansion (SAPE)  
StopCricketValley.org  
Stray Dog Institute  
Sunrise Hunterdon County  
System Change Not Climate Change  
Temple Beth Zion Brookline  
Terra Advocati  
The Compassion Project  
The Green House Connection Center  
The Planetary Health Collective  
The Pollination Project  
The Raven Corps  
TIAA-Divest! From Climate Destruction  
Toxic Free North Carolina  
True Health Initiative  
Tufts University  
U.S. PIRG  
Unite North Metro Denver  
Until Justice Data Partners, Inc.  
Utah Physicians for a Healthy Environment  
Vegan Activist Alliance (VAA)  
Vilicus Farms  
VitalBeeBuds  
Voters for Animal Rights  
Walk Your Talk Productions  
Wall of Women  
Wally Farms  
Water Climate Trust  
Waterkeeper Alliance  
West End Revitalization Association WERA  
WildEarth Guardians  
Wisconsin Health Professionals for Climate  
Actio  
Women Food and Agriculture Network (WFAN)  
Womxn from the Mountain  
World Animal Protection US  
world citizen  
Zero Hour