October 07, 2024

Dear President Biden & Congressional leaders,

The full scale of devastation from Hurricane Helene is only beginning to come into focus. But we know that across the Southeast, communities are shattered, and all Americans have been shocked at the sights of splintered houses, crushed cargo containers, and mud-covered highways. More than 200 people are dead from Florida's Gulf Coast northward to the Appalachian Mountains in Virginia, making Helene one of the worst and deadliest storms in U.S. history.

Climate change made Helene stronger, wetter, and more deadly. The head of U.S. disaster relief, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) administrator Deanne Criswell, specifically implicated global heating as having made the storm more dangerous. Administrator Criswell has also said, "This is going to be a really complicated recovery in each of the five states" impacted by Helene — Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee.

While FEMA struggles for the resources to help communities recover and millions of Americans wonder when they will have access to basic utilities, the fossil fuel industry — which knew about the climate crisis decades ago and has spent billions lobbying to block action to reduce pollution — remains as subsidized as ever. American taxpayers still give more than $20 billion per year in direct state and federal subsidies to fossil fuel production every year. **Our own tax dollars continue to supercharge disasters like Helene.** To quote Rev. Lennox Yearwood of the Hip Hop Caucus: "[Our] tax dollars are going to go to those who are rich and are killing our communities. Do you want that?'"

**As Congress considers a supplemental disaster relief package, we must end the billions of dollars in subsidies we provide to the fossil fuel industry**. In addition to declaring a national climate emergency to cover this and many other multi-state climate disasters, FEMA and other agencies urgently need an additional disaster response package. There is no reason to give the fossil fuel industry a pass for this crisis. As funding is sought to provide urgently needed relief, the costs of this and other climate disasters should be paid by those who did the most to cause the crisis — the fossil fuel industry.

Even as federal investments in clean renewables grow, the fossil fuel industry has managed to maintain and even expand its billions in production subsidies. As the rebuilding begins, the first place to look for money should be the billions in  fossil fuel production subsidies still enjoyed by a tiny list of companies reaping record profits.

Sincerely,

Friends of the Earth
GreenFaith

Indigenous Environmental Network
Oil Change International
Our Revolution
Sunrise Movement

198 methods
350 Bay Area Action
350 Conejo / San Fernando Valley
350 Hawaii
350 Triangle
350.org
Accelerate Neighborhood Climate Action
Action for the Climate Emergency
Alabama Interfaith Power & Light
Alliance for Affordable Energy
Alliance for Democracy Portland Oregon
Amazon Watch
Animals Are Sentient Beings
Asian Pacific Environmental Network
Athens County's Future Action Network
Baltimore Phil Berrigan Memorial Veterans For Peace
Between the Waters
Beyond Extreme Energy (BXE)
Bold Alliance
Border Workers United
Breach Collective
Businesses for a Livable Climate
Call to Action Colorado
CatholicNetwork US
Catskill Mountainkeeper
Center for Constitutional Rights
Clean Air Council
Climate Defense Project
Climate Hawks Vote Civic Action
Colorado Businesses for a Livable Climate
Community for Sustainable Energy
Deignan Institute for Earth & Spirit at Iona University
Democratic Socialists of America Knoxville TN
Earth Ethics
Extinction Rebellion San Francisco Bay Area
For a Better Bayou
Fox Valley Citizens for Peace & Justice
Fridays For Future NYC
Fridays For Future USA

Giniw Collective
Greater New Orleans Housing Alliance
Green House Connection Center
GreenFaith
Greenpeace USA
In the Shadow of the Wolf
Incite Lab
Indivisible Ambassadors
International Marine Mammal Project
Interstate 70 Citizens Advisory Group
John Muir Project
Kickapoo Peace Circle
Labor Network for Sustainability
Larimer Alliance for Health, Safety, & Environment
Littleton Business Alliance
Long Island Progressive Coalition
Mayfair Park Neighborhood Association
Mental Health & Inclusion Ministries
Methane Action
Mind's Eye Productions
Montbello Neighborhood Improvement Association
North American Climate, Conservation & Environment
North Carolina Climate Justice Collective
North Range Concerned Citizens
Oil & Gas Action Network
Oilfield Witness
Organization Name
Our Sacred Earth
Peace, Justice, Sustainability NOW!
Physicians for Social Responsibility Pennsylvania
Preserve Montgomery County Virginia
RapidShift Network
Rise to Thrive
Save Our Illinois Land
Save the Environmental Protection Agency
Small Business Alliance
Social Eco Education
Southwest Organization for Sustainability
Spirit of the Sun
Stand.earth
System Change Not Climate Change
Terra Advocati
Texas Campaign for the Environment
The Descendants Project

The Enviro Show
The People's Justice Council
The Story of Stuff Project
Turtle Island Restoration Network
Unitarian Universalists for a Just Economic Community
Unite North Metro Denver
UnKoch My Campus
Wall of Women
Western Slope Businesses for a Livable Climate
White Rabbit Grove RDNA
Women’s Earth & Climate Action Network
Womxn from the Mountain
Working for Racial Equity
WorldStove
Zero Hour