PSR PHYSICIANS FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

1985 NOBEL PEACE PRIZE

U.S. AFFILIATE OF INTERNATIONAL PHYSICIANS FOR THE PREVENTION OF NUCLEAR WAR

November 16, 2026

United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators,

On behalf of the 35 undersigned health organizations, we encourage Congress to prioritize the health and safety of all Americans in the federal permitting process for energy and infrastructure projects, and in any associated reforms. As organizations, we share a commitment to advancing public health and have long advocated for a rapid and just transition away from health-harming fossil fuels towards cleaner, renewable alternatives.

While we appreciate that the Bipartisan American Affordability and Jobs Act (BAAJA) is the result of months of negotiations, we are concerned that the bill in its current form will lock us into prolonged reliance on fossil fuels. We cannot in good conscience support any proposal that endangers communities or impedes them from taking actions to protect themselves from health and environmental harm. The vague language of certain BAAJA provisions, such as project certainty and definitional changes to terms like disparate treatment, will inevitably be used by industries to further their own profits at the expense of communities that are impacted by industrial pollution. At a time when federal standards on clean air and health protections are being rolled back, permits granted under this bill will cost taxpayers tens of millions in healthcare costs due to increased rates of asthma, cardiovascular diseases, and cancers.

In recent years, energy prices have skyrocketed and our grid has fallen behind, but doubling down on fossil fuels will only make the situation worse. Our dependence on fossil fuels has worsened air quality and intensified climate change. Health consequences from these emissions are prevalent across all body systems over a person's full lifespan. These can include but are certainly not limited to premature birth, impaired neurological function, asthma onset, cardiovascular disease, certain cancers and premature death. Climate change also contributes to worsening health for Americans through prolonged heat exposure, an increase in certain infectious diseases, strains on mental health and natural disasters that cause injury and premature death.

We cannot afford to get permitting reform wrong. Permitting reform should support and hasten the transition to zero-emissions electricity and transportation, maximizing climate and health benefits. Congress must prioritize health and ensure that communities or people at increased risk continue to have a voice in this process. All people deserve clean air and to be a part of the permitting process when projects may impact their wellbeing.

Not only are laws like the Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act and National Environmental Policy Act bedrock environmental policy, they must be viewed as public health policy. The enforcement of these laws has been integral in protecting and improving public health and as such must remain a line of defense for communities nationwide. Moving forward, we urge Congress to prioritize the health of our most vulnerable and the climate, air and water of future generations.

Sincerely,

Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments
American Lung Association
American Public Health Association
Arizona Health Professionals for Climate Action
Chesapeake Physicians for Social Responsibility
Children's Environmental Health Network
Climate Code Blue
Climate Health Now Action Fund
Concerned Health Professionals of New York
Doctors and Scientists Against Wood Smoke Pollution
Environmental Health Sciences
EcoHealth Texas
Greater Boston Physicians for Social Responsibility
Healthy Air & Water Colorado
Healthy Climate Delaware
Healthy Climate New Mexico
Maine Climate & Health Alliance
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
National League for Nursing
Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility
Physician and Scientist Network Addressing Plastics and Health (P-SNAP)
Physicians for Social Responsibility
Physicians for Social Responsibility Arizona
Physicians for Social Responsibility Colorado
Physicians for Social Responsibility Florida
Physicians for Social Responsibility Kansas City
Physicians for Social Responsibility Los Angeles
Physicians for Social Responsibility Maine
Physicians for Social Responsibility New York
Physicians for Social Responsibility Pennsylvania
Physicians for Social Responsibility Texas
Plastic Pollution Coalition
San Francisco Bay Physicians for Social Responsibility
Toxic Free North Carolina
Utah Physicians for a Healthy Environment