



WASHINGTON BUREAU · NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF COLORED PEOPLE
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September 10, 2010

Members
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

via fax

**RE: REITERATION OF NAACP SUPPORT FOR THE U.S.
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY'S INITIATIVE TO
IMPLEMENT THE CLEAN AIR ACT TO ADDRESS CLIMATE CHANGE**

Dear Representative;

On behalf of the NAACP, our nation's oldest, largest and most widely-recognized grassroots-based civil rights organization, I am writing to reiterate the NAACP's strong support, as expressed in our letter of February 26, 2010, for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and its endangerment finding that is required under the Clean Air Act that greenhouse gases in the atmosphere "may reasonably be anticipated both to endanger public health and to endanger public welfare." ***As such, I hope that you will oppose and work against any and all legislative initiatives which would block the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Supreme Court-directed finding.***

The Clean Air Act is a law with a nearly 40-year track record of protecting public health and the environment and spurring innovation by cutting dangerous pollution. The EPA has found that climate change will make attainment and maintenance of national ambient air quality standards more difficult as well as more frequent and more intense heat waves and other events that adversely impact respiratory health. Underserved communities and people who are old, young, or already sick are at greatest risk from the growing threat of climate change. More and more Americans will be living in vulnerable locations as population continues to grow rapidly in cities, along the coasts, and in the South. People of color will be disproportionately impacted because our populations are concentrated in these areas.

Over the past year, the NAACP has conducted research into the disproportionate amount of pollution that is being disseminated into communities of color, and its impact. This research has included:

- a 10 city, 9 plant tour in mid-April of this year, entitled *Clearing the Air Road Tour*, in which we observed communities of color that are adversely and disproportionately impacted by the neighboring coal fired power plants. The cities were selected based on our ranking system that included the level of poisonous emissions, cross referenced by proximity

to large populations of communities of color and low-income communities. During the tour we found communities that were located less than two blocks away from the toxic plants. Many of the profiled members spoke about losing families members to diseases known to be linked with toxic plants like lung cancer. In city after city we discovered elevated rates of respiratory illnesses in communities surrounding those plants, and in subsequent investigations we also heard testimony of children coming home covered in coal ash after playing at a local playground in a community of color that was situated near a processing facility; and

- an investigation in the Gulf Coast to observe and document the impact of the BP Oil Drilling Disaster. During these investigations, which are on-going, we met with communities to hear about their experiences as well as their demands; discussed with NAACP State Conference and Branch Leadership the actual responses of private and governmental agencies, as well as what is still needed; ascertain how other organizations are responding to the disaster; and begin to develop priorities for NAACP national engagement in the disaster, as well as demands for avoiding future similar incidents. We found that pre-existing poor air quality in the Gulf, coupled with the recent BP Drilling Disaster, are causing adverse health effects, including respiratory problems and skin irritations, that have already been detected, along with fears of future problems.

Rather than focus on legislative initiatives which would hinder our nation's progress in addressing the dangers of climate change, the NAACP urges the United States Senate to work toward the enactment of comprehensive climate and clean energy legislation that reduces global warming pollution, and the disparate impact of pollution on communities of racial and ethnic minorities, now. As such, the NAACP looks forward to working with you to ensure that effective actions are taken and the cost to low- and middle-income Americans is not too great. In that vein, I hope that you will feel free to contact me should you have any questions or comments on the NAACP position. I can be reached at (202) 463-2940.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Hilary O. Shelton". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Hilary O. Shelton
Director, NAACP Washington Bureau &
Senior Vice President, Advocacy and Policy