

March 2, 2010

Dear Senator:

On behalf of low-income communities and communities of color, we are writing to urge you to oppose Senator Lisa Murkowski's (R-AK) Resolution of Disapproval (S.J. Res 26), which would block President Obama and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) from enforcing the Clean Air Act to fight global warming.

The Clean Air Act is a proven law with a nearly 40-year track record of protecting communities from dangerous pollution. The law's accomplishments include reducing children's exposure to toxic lead by phasing lead out of gasoline, achieving substantial reductions in dangerous smog and soot pollution in communities, and preserving waterways and our environment from damaging acid rain. In December 2009, EPA found that global warming pollutants endanger public health and welfare, and are covered under the Clean Air Act. Senator Murkowski's resolution would overturn this "endangerment finding" that was directed by the Supreme Court, based on exhaustive scientific review, and finalized after an extensive public comment process.

Big polluters like coal-fired power plants and oil refineries dominate our energy sector and for decades have posed serious threats to public health and the environment, which are magnified for the nation's most vulnerable communities. Big polluters are disproportionately located in low-income communities and communities of color, and their localized air pollution places an immense burden on the health and well-being of the surrounding communities.

For example, a 2002 study by a coalition of environmental justice organizations found that 68 percent of African Americans live within 30 miles of a coal-fired power plant – the distance within which people experience the maximum effects of smokestack emissions – compared with 56 percent of U.S. whites.<sup>1</sup> EPA found that climate change will intensify the impacts of that pollution. Requiring these power plants to reduce global warming pollution under the Clean Air Act is a key tool for protecting the health and well-being of the surrounding, often vulnerable communities.

In addition, the impacts of global warming – record high temperatures, more severe droughts, stronger storms, heavier rainfall and flooding, and sea-level rise – will hit underserved communities first and worst. More frequent and intense heat waves increase the threats of asthma and other respiratory disease; more frequent and intense rainfall and flooding, and sea-level rise increase the threats of water-borne diseases. Low-income and minority communities often have less access to health care and less ability to incur the costs of global warming related disasters.

Senator Murkowski's resolution will undercut the Clean Air Act and severely jeopardize our ability to protect public health in our communities, fight global warming, and transition America to a clean energy economy. To protect public health and welfare, especially in our nation's most vulnerable communities, it is essential that President Obama and EPA use the Clean Air Act to reduce global warming pollution.

We urge you to oppose Senator Murkowski's Resolution of Disapproval (S.J. Res 26).

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<sup>1</sup> *Air of Injustice: African Americans and Power Plant Pollution*, Black Leadership Forum, Clear The Air, Georgia Coalition for the Peoples' Agenda, The Southern Organizing Committee for Economic and Social Justice, October 2002

Sincerely,

350.org

African American Environmentalist Association

BIG: Blacks in Green

Campus Progress

Center for Biological Diversity

Center for Environment, Commerce & Energy

Center For Equitable Education

Center on Race, Poverty & the Environment

Children's Earth Day

Citizens Campaign for the Environment

Citizens Climate Lobby

Citizens Utility Board of Wisconsin

Clean Wisconsin

Climate Collaboration Network of Corporate Ethics International

Climate Ground Zero

Coal River Mountain Watch

Common Ground for Conservation

Community Environmental Defense Council, Inc.

Dakota Resource Council

Delaware Riverkeeper Network

Earthjustice

EARTHWORKS

Ecology Center

Environment Ohio

Fresh Energy

Garfield Foundation

Global Exchange

Global Green

Greenpeace

GreenTreks Network, Inc.

Gulf Restoration Network

Hargett Resources, Inc.

Haverhill Environmental League

Hip Hop Caucus

Institute for Local Self-Reliance

La Onda Verde de Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC)

League of Conservation Voters

LEAP (Lexington Environmental Action Project)

Lower Mississippi Riverkeeper

McClure River Restoration Project

Midwest Environmental Advocates

Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy

Montana Environmental Information Center

National Council for Science and the Environment

National Latino Congreso

NC WARN (Waste Awareness and Reduction Network)  
New York Public Interest Research Group  
New Yorkers for Sustainable Energy Solutions Statewide  
No Biomass Burn  
North Fork Ranch  
Northeast Ohio Gas Accountability Project  
NYC Environmental Justice Alliance  
Onondaga Creek Conservation Council  
Onondaga Creek Kids  
Oregon Center for Environmental Health  
Owegl Revitalization Betterment Corporation (ORBC)  
Peakville Citizens Coalition  
People Organized in Defense of Earth and her Resources (PODER)  
Plains Justice  
Protecting Our Waters  
Student Environmental Action Coalition  
Summit Lake Association for Preservation  
Sustainable Energy & Economy Network  
Texas Environmental Justice Advocacy Services  
The Angel Winds Energy Association, LLC  
The Committee to Preserve the Fingerlakes  
Three Rivers Waterkeeper  
UNEP (United Nations Environmental Programme) Youth Network  
University of Montana Environmental Studies Program  
URI, Mid-Hudson Valley Cooperation Circle  
Valley Watch, Inc.  
Voices For Earth Justice  
Washington Wildlife Federation  
Western North Carolina Alliance  
Wittenberg Center for Alternative Resources  
Women's Environment and Development Organization