

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

December 9, 2019

Dear Leaders in the Environmental Justice Movement:

As members of the Senate Environmental Justice Caucus, the Environment and Public Works Committee, and the Democrats Special Committee on the Climate Crisis, we are writing to request your guidance on how to best address the impacts of climate change in your communities. As you know, for centuries, low-income communities and communities of color have borne the brunt of our environmental burdens. As such, we would like to hear directly from you, leaders who are key voices for your communities, about the threats you are seeing from climate change and what policies we need to address these challenges.

It is well past time for Congress to partner with you and your communities in taking action to address the risks and impacts associated with climate change. Generations of economic and racial inequality have disproportionately exposed workers, communities of color, and others to low wages, toxic pollution, and climate threats. We must commit to justice in our Nation's environmental and economic policies by ensuring that climate change solutions benefit the hardest hit workers and communities. Simply put, special attention must be given to the industries and communities that are most likely to be impacted by the effects of climate change and the transition to a clean economy.

To ensure that priority issues for low-income communities and communities of color are front and center of any plan seeking to address climate change, we request your assistance on developing the following policy issues:

1. Robust federal funding for existing programs, like enforcement and monitoring at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), has an important role to play as we seek immediate solutions to help your communities. Are there current federal programs that address environmental justice concerns that are currently not being funded by Congress and the Trump Administration that require prioritization? In your answer, please provide real-life examples on how funding cuts and efforts to relax EPA enforcement cases are negatively impacting your community.
2. Addressing the cumulative impacts of environmental pollution and increasing climate risks that burden low-income communities and communities of color is a critical priority. What tools, policies, regulations, and programs have proven particularly useful in addressing cumulative environmental impacts?
3. Low-income communities, communities of color, and workers must have equitable access to energy efficiency savings and clean, affordable energy and transportation choices. What barriers exist for your community to access clean energy and transportation and are there policies that have been successful at addressing them that the federal government should prioritize?
4. In addition to legislative solutions to address climate change, we are interested in ensuring existing regulatory tools and programs are used to the greatest extent possible.

What action plans within existing authorities, both regulatory and programmatic, can be used improve climate change mitigation and resilience in your communities?

5. As you plan for the future of your community and bring up the next generation, what are the actions you would like to see the federal government take to build your future capacity to respond to climate change and environmental challenges?

Your knowledge and experience on these issues is invaluable, and we look forward to receiving your input. Our hope is that the questions above help stimulate discussion; they are not intended to limit your response.


You can respond by writing or by a phone interview. We would appreciate your response by **January 31, 2020**. Please note in your response if you do not want your comments to be posted publicly or quoted in a summary report.

Please feel free to reach out to Radha Adhar (202) 224-2324, Kenneth Martin (202) 2240-1373, or Christine Blackburn (202) 224-3173 with any questions.

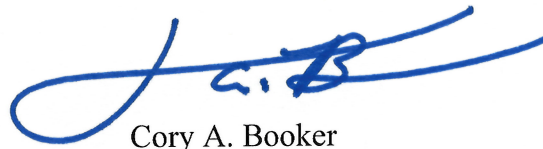
We thank you for considering our request.

Sincerely,


  
Tammy Duckworth  
United States Senator

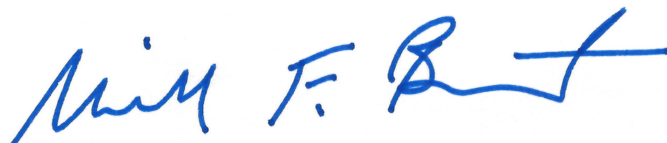
  
Brian Schatz  
United States Senator

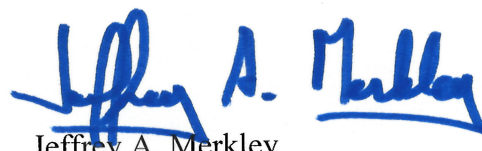
  
Tom Carper  
United States Senator

  
Cory A. Booker  
United States Senator

  
Catherine Cortez Masto  
United States Senator

  
Tammy Baldwin  
United States Senator

  
Michael F. Bennet  
United States Senator

  
Jeffrey A. Merkley  
United States Senator



Tina Smith  
United States Senator



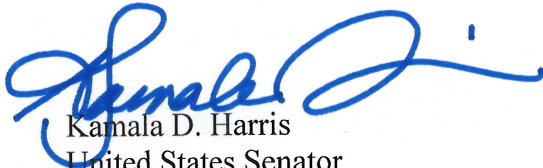
Martin Heinrich  
United States Senator



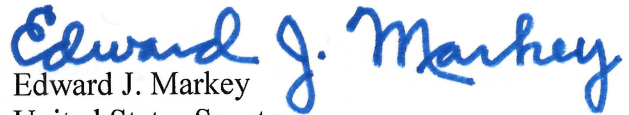
Sheldon Whitehouse  
United States Senator



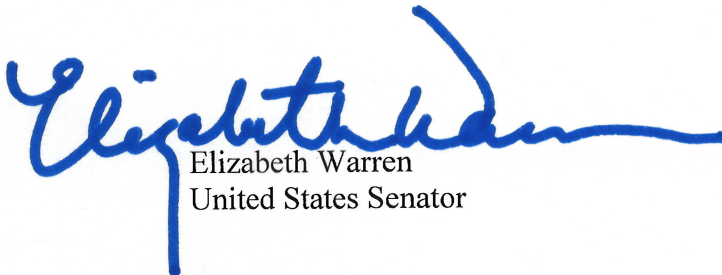
Bernard Sanders  
United States Senator



Kamala D. Harris  
United States Senator



Edward J. Markey  
United States Senator



Elizabeth Warren  
United States Senator



Richard J. Durbin  
United States Senator