

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 6, 2014

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, D.C. 20220

Dear President Obama,

Thank you for taking steps in the Climate Action Plan (CAP) to cut carbon pollution, prepare for climate impacts, and lead international efforts to address global warming. As this February marks the 20th anniversary of Executive Order 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations, we write to request that the CAP explicitly address the unique environmental justice concerns of low-income, minority, indigenous, and Native American communities across the country.

Poverty, and in particular race, are directly correlated with greater exposure to toxics from pollution sources such as highways, waste disposal sites, and coal-fired power plants that are disproportionately sited near low-income, tribal, and racially segregated communities. Combined with factors like crime, substandard housing, and poor nutrition, the cumulative impacts of social inequalities and environmental injustices have led to major health disparities across the country.

Climate change compounds existing inequities. Droughts, floods, wildfires, and extreme weather events increase the vulnerability of people living in areas with limited climate resiliency – communities with poor air quality, unsafe housing, and insufficient resources to plan, prepare and recover from extreme weather. The health implications of climate change – including heat stress, the introduction of infectious diseases to unexposed communities, and the asthma, cardiac, and other chronic diseases associated with poor air quality – are particularly damaging.

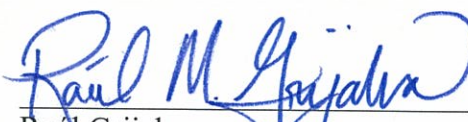
The implementation of the CAP provides an opportunity to address these environmental justice concerns. As you work to reduce carbon and co-pollutants, we urge you to address cumulative impacts and protect already overburdened communities from new pollution sources. Similarly, we believe that actions taken to build climate resiliency around the country should focus on increasing the resource capacity of vulnerable communities unprepared to cope with the devastating effects of global warming. For these communities, climate change is as much an economic and public health issue as an environmental issue. The CAP gives our nation a chance to create jobs in industries like clean energy, energy efficiency, and green infrastructure that help communities adapt and survive climate change.

The 20th anniversary of the Executive Order 12898 is an opportunity to commit to addressing environmental justice in the CAP, and to engage with the environmental justice community and Congress throughout the CAP implementation process. We stand ready to help.

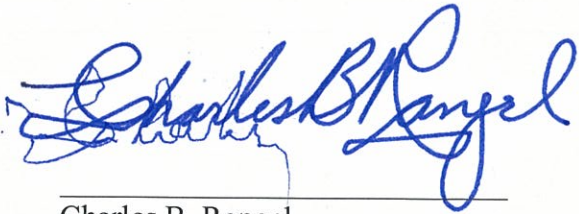
Sincerely,



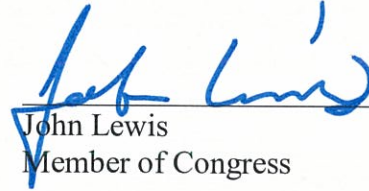
Keith Ellison
Member of Congress



Raul Grijalva
Member of Congress



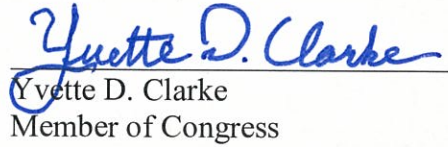
Charles B. Rangel
Member of Congress



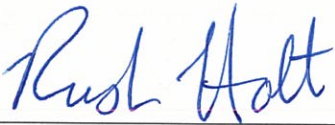
John Lewis
Member of Congress



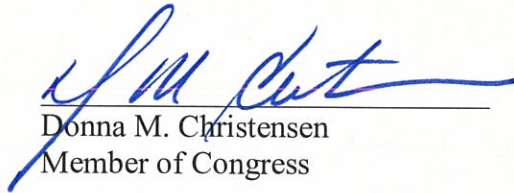
Alcee L. Hastings
Member of Congress



Yvette D. Clarke
Member of Congress



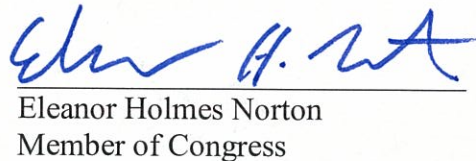
Rush Holt
Member of Congress



Donna M. Christensen
Member of Congress



Mark Pocan
Member of Congress



Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress



Michael M. Honda
Member of Congress



Adam B. Schiff
Member of Congress



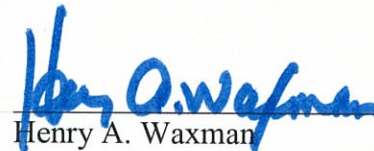
André Carson
Member of Congress



Gwen Moore
Member of Congress



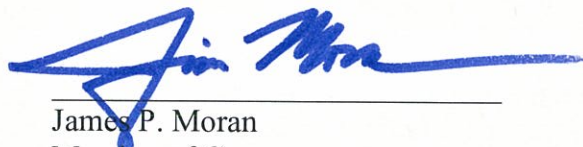
Linda T. Sánchez
Member of Congress



Henry A. Waxman
Member of Congress



Mike Quigley
Member of Congress



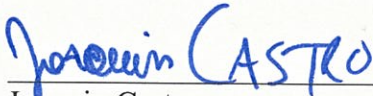
James P. Moran
Member of Congress



Derek Kilmer
Member of Congress



Hakeem S. Jeffries
Member of Congress



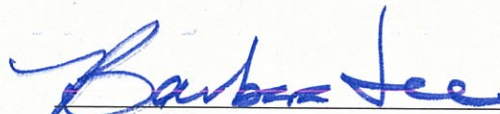
Joaquin Castro
Member of Congress



Rosa L. DeLauro
Member of Congress



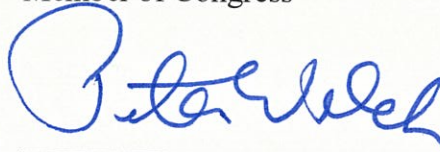
Steven A. Horsford
Member of Congress



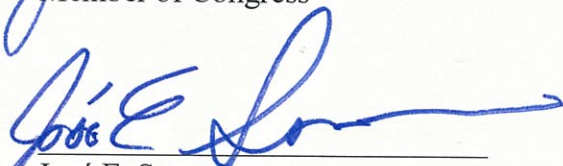
Barbara Lee
Member of Congress



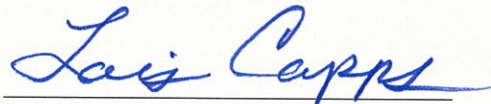
Jerrold Nadler
Member of Congress



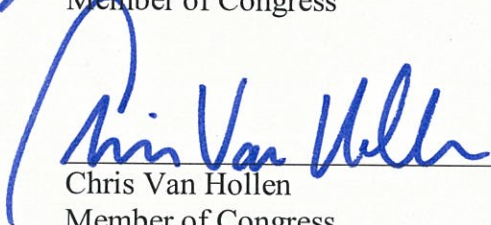
Peter Welch
Member of Congress



José E. Serrano
Member of Congress



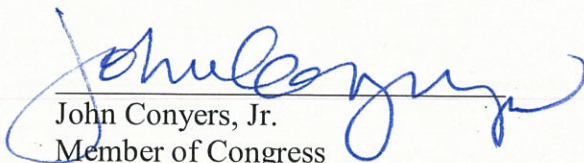
Lois Capps
Member of Congress



Chris Van Hollen
Member of Congress



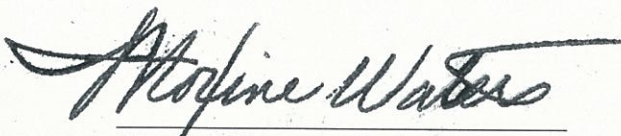
Karen Bass
Member of Congress



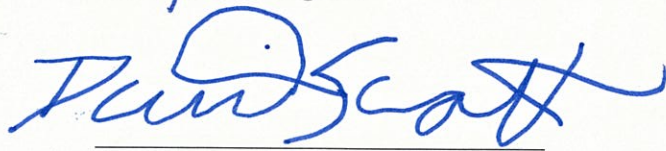
John Conyers, Jr.
Member of Congress



Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.
Member of Congress



Maxine Waters
Member of Congress



David Scott
Member of Congress




Luis V. Gutiérrez
Member of Congress



Janice Hahn
Member of Congress



George Miller
Member of Congress



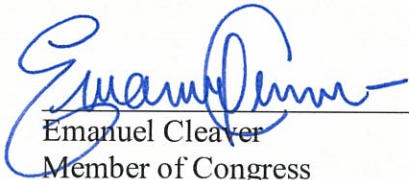
David E. Price
Member of Congress



Alan S. Lowenthal
Member of Congress



David N. Cicilline
Member of Congress




Emanuel Cleaver
Member of Congress



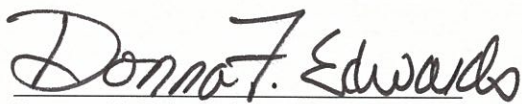
Betty McCollum
Member of Congress



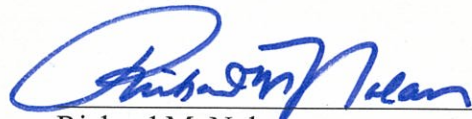
Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress



Danny K. Davis
Member of Congress



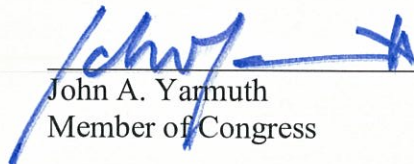
Donna F. Edwards
Member of Congress



Richard M. Nolan
Member of Congress



Judy Chu
Member of Congress



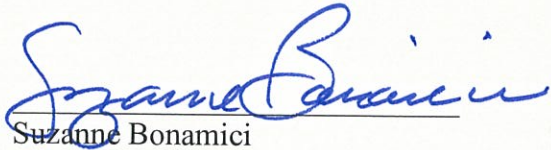
John A. Yarmuth
Member of Congress



Paul Tonko
Member of Congress



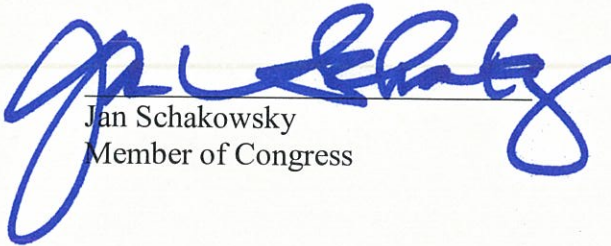
Robert C. "Bobby" Scott
Member of Congress



Suzanne Bonamici
Member of Congress



Mark Takano
Member of Congress



Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress