

EQUITABLE & JUST

NATIONAL CLIMATE PLATFORM

May 13, 2025

The Honorable Brett Guthrie
Chairman
House Committee on Energy and Commerce
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C., 20515

The Honorable Frank Pallone
Ranking Member
House Committee on Energy and Commerce
2322A Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C., 20515

Dear Chair Guthrie and Ranking Member Pallone,

The Equitable and Just National Climate Platform (EJNCP) strongly urges you to protect programs that improve public health such as Air Pollution Monitoring for schools, the Environmental and Climate Justice Block Grants program, Clean Ports Program and the Climate Pollution Reduction Grants program from further cancellations. We are a coalition of national environmental organizations and frontline, grassroots organizations representing communities from across the country - working to center the needs of environmental justice communities in climate policy making. Environmental justice programs and protections are not only essential to communities historically overburdened by pollution - they represent our nation's commitment to a safe and healthy environment for all.

These programs are grounded in evidence based strategies to improve public health. These funds support:

1. Pollution Reduction

The Environment Protection Agency's (EPA) Clean Ports Program allocates \$3 billion in grants to support the adoption of zero-emission equipment and technology at U.S. ports and to help ports create climate action plans aimed at reducing air pollution. In 2024, funding was awarded to [55 projects](#) across the country, expected to cut over 3 million metric tons of carbon emissions—comparable to the annual energy use of 391,220 homes. [Ambient particulate matter pollution](#) (PM) or "soot" is known to be linked with heart diseases, lung cancer and other respiratory diseases that adversely impact the most vulnerable amongst us

(children, elderly, people of color). Nitrogen oxides (NO_x) are a precursor to ozone and contribute to the formation of “smog”, which is unhealthy for everyone but especially harmful for children and people with underlying health conditions. The 55 projects funded through the Clean Ports Program were estimated to reduce [12 thousand short tons of NO_x, and 200 short tons of PM_{2.5} over a span of 10 years.](#)

The EPA's Diesel Emissions Reduction Act (DERA) Program was created to retrofit and replace dirty diesel engines, vehicles and equipment and reduce pollution from diesel emissions. [Between 2008 and 2018](#), DERA led to cleaner air across the country by preventing emissions of 491,000 tons of nitrogen oxides (NO_x) and 16,800 tons of particulate matter (PM) - creating \$8 billion dollars in health benefits. Without DERA funding, communities living near ports, rail yards, and distribution centers will continue to breathe toxic air.

2. Pollution Monitoring

The Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) provided roughly \$230 million for grants to states, local governments, Tribes, and non-profit organizations to support air monitoring, including \$170.5 million for air quality sensors and multipollutant monitoring and \$37.5 million for monitoring air quality at schools. Removing air monitoring funds would threaten public health and drive up healthcare costs. Poor air quality is estimated to be responsible for more than [100,000 premature deaths](#) in the United States each year. Air pollution from burning fossil fuels costs each American an average of [\\$2,500 per year in health care expenses, totaling \\$820 billion per year nationwide](#). There are many communities in the country exposed to dangerous levels of multiple harmful pollutants from multiple sources. Air quality monitoring is an essential tool to improve air quality, protect public health, and ensure compliance with public health and environmental protections.

3. Addressing Health Disparities

The \$3 billion Environmental and Climate Justice (ECJ) grants program support projects that aim to reduce pollution in overburdened communities. This program awarded nearly \$1.6 billion dollars for [105 projects](#) across the country directly to community groups for air and water quality monitoring, reducing lead poisoning in homes and schools, improving home comfort and reducing energy bills through energy efficiency initiatives and remediation of contaminated sites in neighborhoods. The ECJ program specifically targets working class and low-income communities with historically higher burdens of disease and pollution and limited access to healthcare resources. By addressing environmental determinants of health in these areas, the grants contribute to reducing health disparities. Canceling Environmental and Climate Justice grants would rob communities of resources they are counting on to reduce pollution, improve public health, and save money on electricity bills.

4. Planning for Weather Related Emergencies

Communities receiving the ECJ grants are empowered to implement climate resilience projects, including the development of emergency preparedness plans, increasing tree canopy and other green infrastructure to reduce flood risks and cool their neighborhoods during heat waves. Projects are designed by and for communities to address their unique needs and reduce extreme weather risks made worse by climate change. [Heat waves are responsible for more deaths every year](#) than any other extreme weather event—with the highest risks in Black, brown, and Indigenous communities, where many don't have access to air conditioning and neighborhoods lack parks, green spaces and tree cover, which help to bring down temperatures. These initiatives help communities create heat action plans, set up cooling centers and work with their local government to protect the most vulnerable populations from climate-related health risks. Cutting off these funds would also halt efforts to prepare for more intense and dangerous extreme weather,

5. Strengthening Community Capacity

The Climate Pollution Reduction Grants (CPRG) \$5 billion dollar program provides funding to state, local, and Tribal governments to develop and carry out pollution reduction initiatives that also promote collaboration between communities and state and local governments. The program has been utilized by governments in nearly all [50 states to advance community led solutions to improve public health](#) at the local level. Both the ECJ grants and Climate Pollution Reduction grants foster partnerships with local governments and institutions. The grants enhance the capacity of communities to work with their local and state governments to identify and address their unique environmental health challenges. Government to community collaboration and community participatory approach ensures that interventions are effective and meet the specific needs of the community, leading to more sustainable health outcomes.

The grant funds aren't just a dollar figure. These are real losses—for residents breathing polluted air, for communities threatened by climate risks. **We urge you to oppose any provisions in the budget reconciliation bill that cancel public health protections. We urge you to protect environmental justice programs that are crucial to the health and well being of the most vulnerable communities.**

Sincerely,

The Equitable & Just National Climate Platform (EJNCP) was created in 2018 to address the historic exclusion of environmental justice (EJ) groups from national climate change policy discourse. Led by 18 coalition members representing EJ and national groups, the EJNCP includes over 300 signatory organizations united around a shared commitment to ending the environmental racism that has left economically disadvantaged communities, Low income communities, Indigenous communities, Black communities, and communities of color

exposed to disproportionate levels of toxic pollution and bearing the brunt of the climate crisis. To learn more visit ajustclimate.org.