

September 23, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Steny Hoyer  
Majority Leader  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Eddie Bernice Johnson  
Chairwoman  
Committee on Science, Space and Technology  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Frank Pallone  
Chairman  
Committee on Energy & Commerce  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Raul Grijalva  
Chairman  
Natural Resources Committee  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Majority Leader Hoyer, Chairwoman Johnson, Chairman Pallone & Chairman Grijalva:

The Clean Energy Jobs and Innovation Act (H.R. 4447) represents a foundational down payment on climate action that is as necessary as the climate crisis is threatening. Our organizations applaud your leadership – and that of the jurisdictional committees – in crafting a bill which updates critical clean energy research and demonstration programs, while we work towards more comprehensive policy in the coming years. Moreover, the inclusion of substantial environmental justice, clean transportation, clean air, and energy efficiency policies and investments in the bill get us on the right track as a nation grappling with the economic and societal challenges that a necessary rapid transformation to clean energy requires.

It has been over a dozen years since Congress updated the structure and authorizations of critical clean energy research and demonstration programs at the Department of Energy (DOE). Since then, a vibrant clean energy economy has emerged, partially blossoming out of the research, development and demonstration programs at DOE that helped to make solar, wind, energy efficiency, energy storage and other technologies far more efficient and commercially viable. These industries now employ millions of Americans. Also, during that time, the severe human, economic and environmental costs of the climate crisis have become clearer, every year. As has the fact that these costs are disproportionately borne by rural communities, low-income communities and communities of color. We now need to invest in the next generation of clean energy efficiencies and technological breakthroughs –to create new jobs, advance environmental

justice and create the cleaner world we all need. The Clean Jobs and Innovation Act makes vital investments to get us there.

The bill greatly modernizes and expands authorizations for the solar, wind, energy storage, and geothermal offices, and other critical clean energy programs. There are a host of encouraging amendments being considered for this legislation that would build on these positive aspects and give these and other clean energy programs even more ambitious and necessary authorizations; for the first time in an energy policy act, providing more funding for these technologies than dirtier alternatives. Clean energy deployment will also be greatly aided by grid modernization policies in the bill, with an emphasis on programs designed to accelerate the development of transmission infrastructure, critical for wide deployment of renewable generation as well as Buy American and wage rate requirements, and the Offshore Wind Career Training Grant Program, all of which will help grow American jobs in the clean energy sector.

The bill also includes language that would greatly expand energy efficiency usage through directing DOE to establish new model building codes for states, and reauthorizes the Energy Efficiency Conservation and Block Grant (EECBG) program that provides \$17.5 billion in funding for schools, homes, government buildings, and manufacturing facilities to improve efficiency and deploy energy-efficient technologies. It also additionally increases funding for the Weatherization Assistance Program, which helps reduce energy costs for low-income households, the Hope for Homes Act, that would provide for energy efficiency training as well as residential and commercial efficiency rebates. Numerous positive amendments can build on these provisions to augment energy efficiency in public buildings, multifamily housing, and low-income communities.

The House energy innovation package also will make record investments in the technology and infrastructure needed to electrify and substantially reduce emissions from transportation, the largest sector for greenhouse gas emissions. And amendments will further help increase and target these investments in communities of color and low-income communities. The base bill includes record authorizations:

- Over \$36 billion for transportation electrification, including grants and rebates to deploy electric vehicles and related charging infrastructure,
- \$650 million to deploy low- and zero-emissions school buses,
- \$375 million for the Clean Cities Coalition Program, and
- \$2.5 billion for the Diesel Emissions Reduction Act.

In another first for an energy policy act, H.R. 4447 includes an environmental justice title, language which strengthens the Civil Rights Act by increasing legal protections against illegal discrimination based on disparate impact. The title also codifies Executive Order 12898 on Environmental Justice by directing federal agencies to create a working group on environmental

justice compliance and enforcement and to develop environmental justice strategies and annually report on implementation, among many other important EJ provisions.

The bill also vitally includes an HFC phasedown - a critical climate policy that will avert a half degree of warming by the end of the century, create new jobs, and help lay the groundwork for repairing and restoring global leadership on climate by the United States. Similarly, included legislation to provide for research and development into cleaner industrial processes can unlock pivotal, cleaner and more efficient technologies in our factories.

There are many provisions in H.R. 4447 that put us on a path towards a cleaner future, including some in Title III, the Carbon Pollution Reduction Technologies title, that provide funding to stop methane leaks on existing natural gas infrastructure and drive research into direct air capture technologies. Other items in Title III and Title IV are more problematic, such as those that would provide funding for projects that could extend the life of fossil fuel burning power plants or even justify the construction of new fossil fuel power plants. Investing in research and development of technologies to produce materials like chemicals and plastics that will require substantial amounts of natural gas as feedstock and have a long history of harming the environment and health of fenceline communities seems counter to the overall positive direction of this bill. While we recognize the existing nuclear fleet provides a significant amount of our carbon free generation today, we also believe Title IV provides far too many tax dollars to finance aging nuclear infrastructure, to develop nuclear fuel with an increased risk of nuclear proliferation and accidents, and to demonstrate “new” nuclear technologies that in decades of funding have not provided a viable commercial facility, yet produced more waste our children will have to deal with. We strongly recommend these provisions be removed from any final legislation that emerges from a conference process with the Senate.

We also note that Title X could incentivize additional hardrock mining, but greatly appreciate that this section elevates the focus and research for creating a circular economy for critical materials, reducing the need for new materials; a far better option than removing environmental protections from mining.

We again would like to recognize the many valuable contributions that H.R. 4447 would make towards achieving a clean energy and transportation future, stand ready to work with you to realize this goal.

Sincerely,

EarthJustice  
Environment America  
Environmental Defense Fund  
League of Conservation Voters  
Natural Resources Defense Council