

September 28, 2021

The Honorable Joe Manchin
Chairman
Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
United States Senate
306 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Barrasso
Ranking Member
Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
United States Senate
307 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Manchin, Senator Barrasso, and members of the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources,

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to combating climate change, investing in clean energy, and protecting our nation's natural resources, especially during this challenging year.

We, members of the [People, Public Lands, and Climate Collaborative](#), are writing to implore you to advance a people-centered climate investments plan for public lands in the budget reconciliation package.

The People, Public Lands, and Climate Collaborative is an informal network of U.S.-based NGOs who believe in the importance of a climate plan for public lands. Our common goal is ensuring that public lands are part of a just and equitable climate solution by:

- Promoting sustainability, climate resiliency, and healthy communities and economies;
- Protecting, connecting, and restoring critical landscapes and lands; and
- Reducing emissions from energy produced on public lands.

Our members are based in Colorado, Wyoming, Montana, New Mexico, California, Utah, Arizona, and DC. We are on the front lines of the impacts of climate change on our public lands, and on the front lines of action to ensure that these public lands benefit the people and the climate.

As the latest IPCC report makes clear, the climate crisis is accelerating. Despite the unprecedented challenges we are facing, we also have a historic opportunity to advance climate justice and a people-centered climate investments plan for public lands.

We urge you to vote in favor of a reconciliation package that includes investments that act on climate change, harness the power of our public lands, and ensure an equitable transition to clean energy that benefits the country, protects communities on the front lines of climate change, and takes care of fossil fuel-dependent workers and communities. In particular:

- Congress should use budget reconciliation to fund a Civilian Climate Corps to restore ecosystems, perform deferred maintenance, and advance energy retrofitting, prioritizing

projects in front line communities. A CCC will support rural economies through improving public lands and mitigating climate change risks.

- Congress should also advance the first updates ever to federal oil and gas bonding requirements, to help better cover the cost of cleanup. This will save the federal government and taxpayers money, and act to prevent future orphaned wells while protecting communities, creating jobs, and combating climate change.
- Finally, Congress must invest in protecting landscapes like the Grand Canyon, Thompson Divide, Oak Flat, Chaco Canyon, and the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to keep our communities economically, ecologically, spiritually, and culturally resilient.

We need a climate plan for public lands—one that makes bold investments in clean energy and climate resiliency, all while creating good-paying jobs, building a diverse workforce, prioritizing Indigenous stewardship and land management, and strengthening career pathways for historically excluded communities. Advancing a CCC, bonding reform and orphaned well clean up, and landscape protection for the Grand Canyon, Thompson Divide, Oak Flat, Chaco Canyon, and the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge with this budget reconciliation package is how we begin.

We urge you to support our communities by voting in for a reconciliation package that funds the priorities outlined above.

Sincerely,

Julia Bernal, Pueblo Action Alliance

Karyn Bigelow, Creation Justice Ministries

Andrew Black, EarthKeepers 360

Emily Cleveland, Wild Montana

Avery Davis Lamb, Creation Justice Ministries

Emily Hornback, Western Colorado Alliance

Amelia Howe, American Alpine Club

Nate Martin, Better Wyoming

Patrick Nolan, Friends of Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks

Camilla Simon, Hispanics Enjoying Camping, Hunting, and the Outdoors (HECHO)

Beatriz Soto, Protége