



The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Leader Schumer,

On behalf of Greenpeace USA's 2.7 million members, we support your efforts to develop and pass additional comprehensive relief and recovery packages that meet the dire needs of struggling families and frontline workers and move us closer to a just and sustainable economic future.

The COVID-19 crisis has exposed the fragility of our public health system, critical holes in the fabric of our social safety net, and the inequality embedded in our economic system. This crisis has lifted the veil on unjust burdens borne by millions of Americans that are routinely ignored, if not exacerbated, by the Trump Administration — and have been amplified in the Administration's botched response to the pandemic.

As Arundhati Roy has written, the pandemic is a portal — a gateway between one way of living and another.¹ For the millions in this country who bear the weight of an economy too dependent on exploitation and extraction, there is no going back. We must transform.

The COVID-19 crisis has brought our country to a crossroads. It's up to us to choose which path to take. We can continue bailing out major corporations with few strings attached, further concentrating wealth in the hands of executives and shareholders, and bringing us closer to ecological catastrophe and social disruption. Or we can choose another path.

Greenpeace USA urges you to lead on additional COVID-19 relief and recovery packages to meet two major policy goals:

- First, complete the immediate relief efforts absolutely necessary to protect the health, safety, and well-being of essential workers, their families, and other people impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and economic crisis.
- Second, chart a course forward with a just and equitable economic recovery that focuses on rebuilding and creating jobs in the economy of the future.

Below, we outline a non-exhaustive set of vital policy priorities for Congress to include in the upcoming COVID-19 relief packages to meet these goals:

¹ <https://www.ft.com/content/10d8f5e8-74eb-11ea-95fe-fcd274e920ca>



1. **Provide resources to meet immediate needs and ensure relief is given directly to people, by including:**
 - a. Essential Worker Bill of Rights proposed by Senator Elizabeth Warren and Representative Ro Khanna.²
 - b. Paycheck Guarantee Act introduced by Representative Pramila Jayapal.³
 - c. Rent and Mortgage Cancellation Act introduced by Representative Ilhan Omar.⁴
 - d. Moratorium on utility shut-offs resolution introduced by Senator Jeff Merkley.⁵
 - e. Health care for all who need it: Ensure everyone who needs testing or care during the COVID-19 pandemic can receive it without out-of-pocket costs, regardless of insurance coverage or employment status.
 - f. Include everyone, regardless of immigration status: Broaden the eligibility requirements in the CARES Act to enable all workers and families in the U.S. to access relief.
 - g. Aid for states and cities: Expand and immediately unlock further federal aid to states and localities, with parity for Washington, D.C., territories, and Tribes, after these provisions were omitted from the *Interim Emergency Package Aiding Small Businesses and Hospitals*.
 - h. Secure additional relief: Including additional cash relief, expanded unemployment, SNAP, WIC, funding for the U.S. Postal Service, and protections for people who are incarcerated.

2. **Protect Democracy**: COVID-19 threatens to impact the upcoming November general elections in significant ways. We already saw this borne out in the recent Wisconsin primary election, a travesty that must never be allowed to happen again. People should not have to choose between their health and their right to vote. As we approach one of the most consequential elections of our lifetime, the stakes for our country and democracy has never been higher. We have a unique opportunity now to expand access to the polls and to protect the security, integrity, and resilience of our electoral system with at least \$4 billion in funding for states and localities to secure and modernize elections, including:⁶
 - a. Automatic voter registration and voting by mail.
 - b. Increased funding for broadband.⁷
 - c. Nationalized no-excuse absentee and vote-by-mail provisions, including pre-paid postage for these provisions.⁸

² <https://www.warren.senate.gov/newsroom/press-releases/elizabeth-warren-and-ro-khanna-unveil-essential-workers-bill-of-rights>, <https://khanna.house.gov/sites/khanna.house.gov/files/2020.04.27%20Letter%20to%20Leadership%20on%20Essential%20Worker%20Bill%20of%20Rights.pdf>

³ <https://jayapal.house.gov/2020/04/10/jayapal-announces-the-paycheck-guarantee-act/>.

⁴ <https://omar.house.gov/media/press-releases/rep-ilhan-omar-introduces-bill-cancel-all-rent-and-mortgage-payments-during>.

⁵ <https://www.merkley.senate.gov/news/press-releases/merkley-wyden-colleagues-introduce-legislation-to-protect-oregonians-access-to-electricity-and-gas-2020>.

⁶ <https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/estimated-costs-covid-19-election-resiliency-measures>

⁷ As described in the Digital Gap Act, <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/1359/text>

⁸ <https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/policy-solutions/how-protect-2020-vote-coronavirus>



- d. A commitment not to postpone the presidential election in November (*within reason and taking into consideration everchanging public health concerns*).
3. **Oversight and Transparency:** Institute the following safeguards to prohibit corporate attempts to escape oversight and transparency or use taxpayer money for purposes beyond promoting maximum employment:
- a. Immediately release complete information and records of corporate subsidies, loan agreements, covenants and other forms of financial support provided under the CARES Act and other relief-related programs.
 - b. Require the Federal Reserve to manage CARES Act finance facilities in ways that do not exacerbate the potential systemic risks to the financial system posed by climate change.⁹
 - c. Prohibit any relief funds for companies with tax haven headquarters or subsidiaries. Companies must disclose country-by-country tax payments for any fiscal years during which funds and loans were received and not fully returned.
 - d. Establish clear prohibitions on use of funds for purposes other than support and retention of workforce including ensuring no dismissals without cause, no forced arbitration, and no use of funds for labor consultants.
 - e. Establish clear prohibitions (and close existing loopholes) on recipients' use of any funds (corporate or government) for stock buybacks, dividends, and increases in executive compensation until federal loans are paid back in full. Cap executive compensation at 50 times that of median employee pay, and prohibit golden parachutes. Prohibit corporate tax deductions on pay over \$1 million/year.
 - f. Prohibit federal lobbying on relief or stimulus legislation or environmental, occupational safety, consumer safety, or public safety-related laws and regulations until funds are fully returned. Prohibit corporate contributions to any business or trade associations that have lobbied on these issues within the past 24 months. Subject all meeting notes and transcripts related to such programs to FOIA, including interactions with Treasury and Federal Reserve officials, and other officials in relevant agencies, departments, or the White House. All related teleconference meetings should similarly be recorded and covered by FOIA.
 - g. Strip the Treasury Secretary's ability to waive any oversight, transparency, or worker protection provisions out of the CARES Act.
4. **Not one cent to fossil fuel executives and shareholders:** Oppose all attempts to bailout the fossil fuel industry and establish new restrictive conditions on loans through the CARES Act.
- a. Prohibit the creation of a new lending facility for the oil and gas industry under the CARES Act and oppose changes to debt ratings requirements and date changes in the Credit Facility Term Sheets.^{10 11}

⁹ https://d17a0173-b97b-4c08-a2e3-f8ea72c0874b.usrfiles.com/ugd/d17a01_62f18f6e12614fddac890d692066aea8.pdf, <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/economy/reports/2019/11/21/477190/climate-change-threatens-stability-financial-system/>

¹⁰ <https://business.financialpost.com/pmn/business-pmn/mnuchin-weighs-lending-facility-for-struggling-oil-companies>



- b. Oppose changes to the lending terms under the Main Street Lending Program to allow oil companies to use loan proceeds to pay off or settle pre-COVID-19 pandemic loans and debts.¹²
- c. Oppose reductions, delays, or suspension of royalty fees for production on public lands.
- d. Oppose attempts to manipulate the Strategic Petroleum Reserve and lease federal storage space for private oil companies.
- e. Block federal steps to preempt state pipeline permitting laws.
- f. Oppose all regulatory rollbacks.
- g. Prohibit a suspension of Jones Act provisions to benefit the oil industry.
- h. Exclude oil, gas, and coal companies from the definition of “eligible business” in *Section 4003: Economic Stabilization and Assistance to Severely Distressed Sectors of the United States Economy*.
- i. Forgo subsidies and tax breaks for any company that receives aid.
- j. Require a moratorium on new oil, gas, and coal leasing on public lands for any company that receives aid.
- k. Require a moratorium on all crude oil export activities for any company that receives aid.

5. 21st Century Community Revitalization Beyond Fossil Fuels: In addition to launching a multi-trillion dollar green infrastructure¹³ effort and securing equitable and just investments and protections for communities on the frontlines of pollution and climate disasters,¹⁴ Congress should launch innovative programs to spur job creation beyond fossil fuel extraction:

- a. Create a national Worker and Community Protection Fund¹⁵ to support fossil fuel workers, their families, and impacted communities in the current oil industry contraction and long-term energy transition.
- b. Create an Orphan Well Remediation Program¹⁶ to promote economic recovery in regions that have historically depended on employment in the oil and gas sector, while removing hazards to public health and safety and reducing carbon emissions. This program would address the backlog of orphaned oil and gas wells, while at the same time reforming the bonding process to remove the risk that wells drilled today would become orphaned in the future.

¹¹ <https://senatorkevincramer.app.box.com/s/7agwojir8j8pe2c9li1dkcytoaq20k34>

¹² <https://www.markey.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/Fed%20Ending%20Fossil%20Fuel%20Request%20Letter.pdf>

¹³ Only support genuine clean energy solutions and do not classify biomass or biofuels as part of green infrastructure as they almost always emit more greenhouse gas emissions over their life cycle than conventional fuel sources. Investment in a ‘blue’ infrastructure package alongside a green one would help rebuild our blue economy, protect and restore ocean habitat and adapt our oceans and coasts in a climate changing world. Key elements of a blue stimulus package would include expansion of offshore renewable energy, building climate-ready fisheries, expanding community-based seafood markets, investing in regenerative ocean farming (seaweed), building climate smart ports, protecting and restoring ocean habitat, investing in nature-based marine carbon sequestration, ending offshore drilling, reducing ocean trash, holding big ag accountable for upstream pollution, collective management of international waters, pre and post disaster mitigation, flood insurance reform, managing for drought, and investing in our Great Lakes.

¹⁴ https://medium.com/@green_stimulus_now/a-green-stimulus-to-rebuild-our-economy-1e7030a1d9ee

¹⁵ <http://www.greenpeace.org/usa/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Protecting-Energy-Workers-Briefing-Greenpeace-April-20201.pdf>

¹⁶ <https://www.greenpeace.org/usa/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Orphan-Oil-Wells-Briefing-Greenpeace-April-2020.pdf>

6. Pursue a Stabilization Strategy for the Oil Industry’s Inevitable Permanent Decline:

- a. Hold hearings to explore a federal stabilization strategy for the orderly wind down of poorly managed fossil fuel companies and abandoned fossil fuel assets, with explicit requirements for fulfilling obligations to workers and communities and initiating a managed decline of reserves and production in line with 1.5°C global warming targets.¹⁷

Greenpeace USA appreciates your tireless efforts to protect workers and communities during the COVID-19 crisis under immense pressure. We are determined to advocate on behalf of our millions of members — especially all those facing the health and economic impacts of this crisis right now — for the just and equitable relief and recovery we all deserve. We know so much more is possible and necessary, and we are prepared to work with Congress to advance legislative priorities that support our vision of a more compassionate, just, and sustainable country when we emerge from this historic crisis.

Sincerely,



Annie Leonard
Executive Director
Greenpeace USA

¹⁷ <https://thenextsystem.org/learn/stories/case-public-ownership-fossil-fuel-industry>