



January 27, 2021

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

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Minority Leader McCarthy, Majority Leader Schumer, and Minority Leader McConnell:

As a coalition of some of the nation’s largest labor unions and environmental organizations, collectively representing millions of members and supporters, the BlueGreen Alliance and its partners urge you to pass legislation to provide urgently needed relief to the COVID-19 crisis and make the strategic investments necessary for a sustained, clean, and just economic recovery.

We thank you for your efforts to date to address the crisis, yet urgent relief is still needed. America has surpassed 25 million cases and 419,000 deaths due to COVID-19. Nearly a year into this pandemic, cases are reaching record-highs, unemployment is once again rising, state and local governments are ravaged, and workers continue to struggle to stay safe and healthy on the job. We urge you to build on President Biden’s American Rescue Plan to deliver a relief package focused on working people and the most vulnerable that safeguards working peoples’ jobs, homes, and livelihoods.

At the same time, we must think long-term about how we provide ongoing security for American workers and families and put America back to work safely. The COVID-19 pandemic devastated our economy, and will only continue to do so. This crisis has demonstrated that our economy already wasn’t working for too many Americans. We went into this pandemic with three ongoing interconnected crises: economic inequality, racial inequality, and climate change. The COVID-19 pandemic has cast a harsh spotlight on just how severe and disproportionate the impacts of

these crises are. People of color are more economically vulnerable in this crisis, and disproportionately their lives are being put at greater risk: Black Americans represent 16.8% of COVID-19 deaths while making up just 12.4% of the U.S. population and among Black and Hispanic/Latino Americans, death rates are at least 2.8 times higher than for whites.

As we make investments to get the economy back on track, everything we do must be aimed at building a stronger, fairer, and cleaner economy that creates and sustains the good, high-paying jobs of the future and makes our communities and workers more resilient to crises.

Congress must act now to:

- **Address working people and families' immediate needs.** Congress must act strongly to protect the most vulnerable; safeguard working peoples' jobs, homes, and livelihoods; shore up essential public services; and ensure that frontline workers' health and safety is protected. This must include rejecting any provisions to shield corporations from liability if their workers get sick on the job. Congress must also ensure that essential sectors of the economy are able to continue functioning amidst this state of emergency. These actions are needed now to protect workers, families, and communities from acute harm and to help stave off an even graver economic crisis.
- **Invest in our infrastructure,** including by modernizing our schools, hospitals, and transit systems; delivering broadband to rural communities; modernizing our grid and upgrading water systems; and protecting communities through natural infrastructure resiliency. These investments can provide a much-needed jolt to our economy while delivering good jobs and public health and climate benefits to communities.
- **Support and retool America's manufacturing sector** with a major reinvestment in fortifying and transforming heavy industry and retooling to reduce emissions and build more of the clean products, materials, and technologies of the future here—all while providing more pathways into good, family-supporting jobs. We cannot cede American manufacturing jobs to our global competitors because we failed to be forward-thinking about boosting the sector for the short and long term.
- **Rebuild the public sector and invest in social infrastructure and the care economy.** The crises we face have put a spotlight on the critical importance of investing in the workers on the front lines of fighting this virus and that keep our communities thriving, such as first responders, teachers, nurses, public health workers, social workers, safety net program workers, homecare, and childcare workers. We need to rebuild the capacity of the public sector, the health care system, education, and community-based resources to prepare for and respond to disasters like COVID-19 today or other crises like climate change.
- **Provide critical long term support and protections for workers.** Workers and communities cannot deal with crises alone—whether they are disastrous hurricanes, fires, or global pandemics. We must rebuild and expand the social safety net, including pensions, healthcare, and retirement security, and ensure and enforce worker and community health and safety. These policies will help ensure that working families are better equipped to handle the next financial, health, or other crisis we face.

- **Prioritize equitable rebuilding and investments in those communities most in need,** including low-income communities, communities of color, and deindustrialized communities. This should include supports for workers hardest hit by changes in the energy economy and disabled coal miners with black lung. The response to this crisis should deliver a healthier, cleaner, and more equitable future.

We urge you to pass legislation that shows up in the pockets of those who need it, protects workers, and makes investments in a sustainable recovery to ensure that we rebuild a cleaner, fairer, and more resilient economy

Sincerely,

BlueGreen Alliance
American Federation of Teachers
Environmental Defense Fund
International Union of Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers
League of Conservation Voters
National Wildlife Federation
Natural Resources Defense Council
Service Employees International Union
Sierra Club
United Steelworkers Union
Union of Concerned Scientists
Utility Workers Union of America