

Senator Robert Casey Jr.
Russell Senate Office Building, 393
Washington, DC 20002

Senator Joseph Manchin III
Hart Senate Office Building, 306
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Rand Paul
Russell Senate Office Building, 167
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Sherrod Brown
Hart Senate Office Building, 303
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Patrick Toomey
Russell Senate Office Building, 248
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Shelley Capito
Russell Senate Office Building, 172
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Mitch McConnell
Russell Senate Office Building, 317
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Robert Portman
Russell Senate Office Building, 448
Washington, DC 20510



May 6, 2022

To: Members of Congress,

We, the undersigned 40 members of the Appalachian community and allies, write to emphasize to you the importance of passing a bold reconciliation package that includes provisions for reviving the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) as part of our plan to address the climate crisis in a way that supports good-paying, sustainable jobs in the communities that have powered this nation for more than a century.

The CCC is an incredible opportunity to target natural infrastructure investments into coal country for reforesting Appalachia, restoring wetlands, remediating brownfields and repairing our damaged lands. This program can not only help absorb carbon and mitigate climate change impacts, it can put people to work in good-paying jobs, especially our most vulnerable citizens that were caught up in the opioid epidemic and now face significant barriers to employment.

Any reconciliation package should advance a sustainable economic vision for a 21st century Appalachia—one that is good for working people, communities, the environment and our health. Our communities have many assets, but a sustainable economic future can't be achieved without significant public investment, strong policies, and responsible economic development approaches designed to maximize the benefit to the community as a whole. Our region has long provided raw materials to fuel the prosperity of the nation but too many of our communities rank

in the bottom 10 percent of the nation for high poverty and unemployment rates, and low incomes. A modernized Civilian Conservation Corps presents an opportunity to bring much-needed federal resources into the region to bolster our economy and build local wealth.

A revised CCC could and should prioritize census tracts that have been exploited by absentee corporations in the extractive industries, including those communities hard hit from shuttered power plants, abandoned mine lands, former steel and industrial facilities. And, if done right, we can use this opportunity to provide on-the-job training opportunities and second chances for folks caught up in our criminal justice system.

Not only would a new CCC repair our damaged lands in the Appalachian region, it could be an important source of living wage jobs and as apprenticeship prep training programs that build career pathways towards family sustaining and unionized careers for underserved communities by prioritizing employment to black and indigenous people of color, low-income workers, rural workers and returning citizens. However, in order for this program to truly benefit those most at risk, the jobs must pay a basic wage of at least \$15/hour and the program administrators must have strong links to union apprenticeship programs so that the job can be the start of a career and not just a one-time opportunity.

As conversations about a \$555 billion climate reconciliation package advance, we hope you will recognize that reviving the Civilian Conservation Corps is essential to maximizing benefits to Appalachian communities and workers. As a climate reconciliation package comes to fruition, we urge you to prioritize the Civilian Conservation Corps. If carefully crafted, a revived CCC could be an incredible opportunity for the Appalachian economy to thrive in a way that is good for workers, our communities and our environment.

Signed,

ReImagine Appalachia

Keystone Research Center

PennFuture

Policy Matters Ohio

West Virginia Rivers Coalition

1worker1vote

Allegheny County Clean Air Now (ACCAN)

Appalachian Institute, Wheeling University

Appalachian Pagan Ministry

Appalshop, Inc.

Berks Gas Truth

Blacklick Creek Watershed Assn
Breathe Project
Chesapeake Climate Action Network
Christians For The Mountains
Climate Reality Project: Susquehanna Valley PA Chapter
Eastern PA Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation (EPCAMR)
FreshWater Accountability Project
Friends of the Riverfront
Global Institute for Sustainable Prosperity
Grounded Strategies
Kentucky Resources Council
Kentucky Waterways Alliance
Keystone Progress
Landforce
League of Women Voters Pennsylvania
Moms Clean Air Force in Ohio
NASW WV
Ohio Environmental Council
Patricia M. DeMarco, Ph.D. Vice President Borough Council
Pennsylvania Council of Churches
Physicians for Social Responsibility Pennsylvania
Rail Pollution Protection Pittsburgh
Rise Up WV
RuralOrganizing.org Education Fund
The Sustainable Enterprise Accelerator at Slippery Rock University
Vincentian Ohio Action Network
West Virginia Council of Churches
West Virginia NAACP Conference of Branches
WV Citizen Action