For Immediate Release:
December 18, 2017

Contact:
Maya van Rossum, the Delaware Riverkeeper, Delaware Riverkeeper Network, 215-369-1188x102
Ted Glick, Beyond Extreme Energy, 973-460-1458
Karen Feridun, Berks Gas Truth, 610-678-7726

Environmentalists Urge Congress to Challenge Trump Agenda

Washington, DC – 80 organizations sent a letter to Congress urging them to stand up to President Trump and challenge his anti-environment, pro-fossil fuel actions, including voting against the new tax bill.

The Trump administration has been taking aggressive action to roll back environmental protections and perpetuate, and even increase, the power of the fossil fuel industry. The letter, sent to all members of Congress, urges Congress to serve the best interests of the country and asks them to oppose actions by Donald Trump to advance legislation, regulations, policies and decisions that devastate our future.

It is imperative that Congress recognize the threats from the Trump administration’s anti-clean energy actions, such as withdrawing from the Paris Climate Accord and removing the Department of Interior’s moratorium on new coal mining on federal lands.

In part, the letter asks that Congressional members of conscience, regardless of their political affiliation, not allow Donald Trump to drive a political agenda of:

- increasing the political power of industry and corporate lobbyists,
- perpetuating and increasing our nation’s dependence on dirty fossil fuels,
- advancing more pipelines and energy export facilities that are abusing communities, taking property rights, wrecking environments, and
- undermining the ability of the clean energy industry to generate sustainable jobs while stimulating a healthy habitat.

This letter was submitted by the organizations to coincide with the tax bill debates. The proposed bill includes language that delivers major blows to clean energy, including opening Alaska’s Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to drilling.

“Communities across our nation are already suffering from environmental degradation, so much so that a recent UN investigator expressed shock at seeing such significant levels of environmental devastation in any first world country, let alone the United States. The eyes of the world, of history and of future generations are watching with horror as Congress allows Donald Trump to advance his devastating environmental agenda. It is time for Congress and every one of its members to stand up for protection of the natural resources that are essential to us all, clean water; clean air; healthy soils to grow healthy foods; healthy forests, wetlands, plant and wildlife communities,” said Maya van Rossum, the Delaware Riverkeeper, leader of the Delaware Riverkeeper Network and author of a new book titled The Green Amendment, which advances the idea of constitutional level protection for the environment.

“Without a doubt, Donald Trump and his administration are a clear and present danger to our already-stressed climate and environment. His policies since taking office, across the board, have been to the benefit of powerful oil, gas and coal CEO’s and inimical to the interests of everybody else. His is a government of, by and for the polluting and greedy 1%. A tax bill passed on his watch in collaboration with only Republicans in Congress
would be a loser for the American people and the earth. Where are the Republican Congresspeople with a conscience? They seem to be going the way of the world’s rapidly-shrinking coral reefs and glaciers,” said Ted Glick, Organizer with Beyond Extreme Energy.

"The Trump administration's environmental agenda puts humanity at risk in ways it will be very difficult, if not impossible to walk back in the next administration. We get no do-overs once we’ve pushed the planet over the climate precipice. Our system of checks and balances was designed to protect us from a rogue characters operating out of ignorance and greed. Congress has a mandate to put a check on Trump's recklessness," said Karen Feridun, Founder, Berks Gas Truth.


###
Delaware Riverkeeper Network ~ Berks Gas Truth
Beyond Extreme Energy ~ Sustainable Medina County ~ SCRAM
OVEC-Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition
Green Sanctuary at the Unitarian Church of Barnstable ~ Mason Pipeline Committee
Greenville New Hampshire Pipeline Resistance ~ Popular Resistance
350 Mass Cape Cod ~ Breathe Easy Susquehanna County
ECHO Action & NH Pipeline Resistance ~ Occupy Bergen County
Gas Free Seneca ~ Seneca Lake Guardian, A Waterkeeper Affiliate
Catskill Citizens for Safe Energy ~ Roseland Against Compressor Station (RACS)
Greenvest ~ CDL Consulting ~ Howard County Climate Action
Homeowners Against Land Taking (HALT) ~ DiBianca Associates LLC
New Mexico Story Power ~ Schuylkill Pipeline Awareness
Clean Water Action ~ Altamaha Riverkeeper
Visualizing Pipeline Impacts ~ Earth Action, Inc.
Milford Doers/Residents of Crumhorn Mountain
PAUSE - People of Albany United for Safe Energy
Virginia Citizens Consumer Council ~ New Progressive Alliance
StopNED ~ Union County (NJ) Peace Council ~ Resist the Pipeline
Elmira and Friends Against Fracking ~ Durham CCAP
Environment New Jersey ~ Bucks County CCAP
Sullivan Alliance for Sustainable Development
Preserve Montgomery County Virginia ~ Green America
Pennsylvania Alliance for Clean Water and Air
Center for Biological Diversity ~ Bold Alliance ~ Advocates for Springfield, NY
The Green Sanctuary Committee, Community Church of New York, UU
New Jersey Tenants Organization ~ Cook Inletkeeper
Orange Residents Against Pilgrim Pipelines ~ 350 Loudoun
New Hampshire Pipeline Awareness ~ Damascus Citizens for Sustainability
Catskill Mountainkeeper ~ Citizens for Water
Aquashicola/Pohopoco Watershed Conservancy ~ NYH2o
Monmouth County Democratic Progressive Caucus ~ Citizens for Clean Water
Already Devalued and Devastated Homeowners of Parsippany
North Jersey Pipeline Walkers ~ Stop the Algonquin Pipeline Expansion
Chris Dennis Environment Foundation ~ Bus For Progress
Committee to Preserve the Finger Lakes ~ Citizens Coalition for a Safe Community
Coalition to Protect New York ~ Coalition Against the Pilgrim Pipeline (CAPP)
Protect Our Water Heritage Rights ~ Compressor Free Franklin
Franciscan Response to Fracking ~ People Demanding Action
Pequannock Seniors/Indivisible ~ Sustainable Loudoun
SEED (Securing Economic and Energy Democracy) for SW NM
Guardians of the Brandywine ~ Our Revolution New Mexico
Frack Free Four Corners ~ Sustainable Tompkins
December 18, 2017
Dear members of Congress,

Donald Trump has been in office for less than a year and already his presidency is steeped in controversy from mounting evidence and seeming admissions of obstruction of justice to credible and increasing claims of sexual assault to legitimate questions about whether the decisions made and actions taken are to serve the goals of foreign leaders or Trump’s own family at the expense of U.S. citizens, communities and constitutional rights.

As the country grapples with the administration’s wrongdoing and how to address it, Trump has been taking aggressive action to roll back important environmental protections and perpetuate, and even increase, the power of the fossil fuel industry. His actions will only exacerbate the climate crisis we face and threaten the future of the earth.

Members of Congress of conscience, regardless of their political affiliation, should not allow Donald Trump to drive a political agenda of:

- increasing the political power of industry and corporate lobbyists,
- perpetuating and increasing our nation’s dependence on dirty fossil fuels,
- advancing more pipelines and energy export facilities that are abusing communities, taking property rights, wrecking environments, and
- undermining the ability of the clean energy industry to generate sustainable jobs while stimulating a healthy habitat.

We appeal to all members of Congress to recognize the threats that the Trump agenda poses to our national security and our very ability to survive. We are at the nexus of environmental disaster and political chaos. Congress has an obligation to serve the best interests of our republic and must oppose actions by Donald Trump to advance legislation, regulations, policies and decisions that devastate our future.

In the past year, Donald Trump and his administration have advanced a series of actions and decisions, which will have devastating impacts on our environment, on U.S. citizens, communities, jobs, future generations and the future of our earth. Here is but a short list of concerning actions and decisions taken:

⇒ Advanced a Tax Plan that calls for fossil fuel drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to pay for the tax cuts that benefit the wealthiest among us as well as corporations already flush with cash;
⇒ Advanced a Tax Proposal that would partially or completely roll back tax breaks meant to encourage wind and solar development;
⇒ Signed executive order to advance approval of the Keystone XL and Dakota Access oil Pipelines;
⇒ Suspended a study of health risks on residents who live near mountain top removal coal mine sites;
⇒ Repealed anti-corruption rule that required energy companies to disclose payments to foreign governments;
⇒ Instructed the EPA to rewrite the ‘water of the United States’ rule in ways that reduce environmental protection;
⇒ Instructed the EPA to stop collecting methane emissions data from around 15,000 oil and gas operations, under the advisement of industry;
Instructed EPA to roll back fuel efficiency standards that are designed to push down greenhouse gases and other pollutants declaring they are too “costly for automakers’;

Denied a bid to halt the use of harmful pesticides that EPA scientists identified as being harmful to public health;

Rolled back limits on toxic discharges, including arsenic, lead, and mercury, from power plants into public water;

Placed a 2 year pause on regulations that would reduce emission leaks from oil and gas operators, despite regulator acknowledgement that the pollution leaks result in “disproportionate” harm to children;

Canceled rule to protect whales and turtles from Fishing Nets

Took action to shrink Bears Ears and Grand Staircase Monuments and thereby opening the door for fossil fuel development;

Decreasing the EPA’s budget by 31%, which will result in the elimination of programs to restore the Great Lakes, Chesapeake Bay, and Puget Sound. As well as end the EPA’s lead-risk reduction and radon detection programs and cut funds for the Superfund cleanup program;

Signed joint resolution passed by Congress revoking the U.S. Department of Interior’s “Stream Protection Rule” that placed stricter restrictions on dumping mining waste into surrounding waterways;

Withdraw from the Paris Climate Deal;

Signed an executive order fast-tracking approval for “high priority infrastructure projects.” Any governor or Cabinet secretary may ask for a project to be designated as high-priority if approved by the chairman of the White House Council on environmental Quality, the project will go to the front of the line for any agency required to review and approve it;

Nominated Robert Powelson, member of Pennsylvania’s Public Utility Commission during the period of rapid natural gas development in Pennsylvania and Neil Chatterjee, an energy policy adviser to US Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, and Kevin McIntyre an attorney who has represented fossil fuel and utility interests for FERC;

Signed an executive order reviewing any actions in the past decade that expanded existing national marine sanctuaries or established new ones and may have interfered with potential gas and oil development or mineral extraction;

Instructed the Department of the Interior to review and possibly repeal safety and enforcement standards that protect over 40 national parks from impacts of oil and gas drilling including the Everglades, Grand Teton, and Mesa Verde;

Directed the EPA to withdraw and rewrite rules that mandate power plants limit carbon dioxide, including new rules promulgated under the Clean Air Act;

Ordered the Attorney General’s office to stop defending certain measures that would reduce coal plan pollution;

Withdrawing regulations that require government agencies to consider the effects of climate change when deciding whether to issue permits for fossil fuel production or infrastructure projects such as pipelines;

Dismantled hydraulic fracking rules from BLM that improved safety standards for hydraulic fracturing wells and ensured contaminated wastewater is appropriately stored and required drilling companies to disclose when they are using toxic chemicals;

Repeal previous executive orders on climate change that were designed to help prepare the US for impacts of climate change including floods, rising seas, prolonged heat waves, and wildfires;

Removed Department of Interior’s moratorium on new Coal mining on federal lands;

Withdraw a rule that would help consumers buy more fuel-efficient tires;

Overturned a ban on the hunting of predators in Alaskan wildlife refuges.

We are all left to ask the important question “why”. Why has Donald Trump taken these devastating steps and why is Congress not speaking up and speaking out to try and stop him?
Again, we appeal to all members of Congress to:

- recognize the threats that the Trump agenda poses to our national security and our very ability to survive; and
- to serve the best interests of our republic by opposing the actions of Donald Trump to advance legislation, regulations, policies and decisions that devastate our future.

Urgently Requested by:
Maya K. van Rossum, the Delaware Riverkeeper, Delaware Riverkeeper Network
Karen Feridun, Founder, Berks Gas Truth
Ted Glick, Organizer, Beyond Extreme Energy
Kathie Jones, Organizer, Sustainable Medina County
George Billard, Co-Founder, SCRAM
Vivian Stockman, Vice Director, OVEC-Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition
Susan Starkey, Member, Green Sanctuary at the Unitarian Church of Barnstable
Kathleen Chapman, Co-chair, Mason Pipeline Committee
Henri Vaillancourt, Member, Greenville New Hampshire Pipeline Resistance
Margaret Flowers, Co-director, Popular Resistance
Lisa Coedy, Coordinator, 350 Mass Cape Cod
Rebecca Roter, Chairperson, Breathe Easy Susquehanna County
Stephanie Scherr, Director, ECHO Action & NH Pipeline Resistance
Sally Jane Gellert, Member, Committee on Correspondence, Occupy Bergen County
Yvonne Taylor, Vice President, Gas Free Seneca
Joseph Campbell, President, Seneca Lake Guardian, A Waterkeeper Affiliate
Jill Wiener, Member, Catskill Citizens for Safe Energy
Mary Kushner, Founding Member, Roseland Against Compressor Station (RACS)
David Schreiber, Investment Advisor/Financial Planner, Greenvest
Cheryl Vichness, Vice President of Operations, CDL Consulting
Elisabeth Hoffman, Advocacy Team Member, Howard County Climate Action (MD)
Christiana Foglio, Board of Trustee, President, Homeowners Against Land Taking (HALT)
Vincent DiBianca, Founding Partner, DiBianca Associates LLC
Asha Canalos, Co-founder, Co-editor, New Mexico Story Power
Faith Zerbe, Co-Founder, Schuylkill Pipeline Awareness
David Pringle, NJ Campaign Director, Clean Water Action
Jen Hilburn, Executive Director, Altamaha Riverkeeper
Jess Irish, Co-Director, Visualizing Pipeline Impacts
Mary Gutierrez, Executive Director, Earth Action, Inc.
Otto Butz, Founder, Milford Doers/Residents of Crumhorn Mountain
Diana Wright, Facilitator, PAUSE - People of Albany United for Safe Energy
Irene Leech, President, Virginia Citizens Consumer Council
Ed Griffith, Liaison Officer, New Progressive Alliance
Cathy Kristofferson, Co-founder, StopNED
Diane, Chair, Union County (NJ) Peace Council
James Michel, Co-founder, Resist the Pipeline
Doug Couchon, Co-founder, Elmira and Friends Against Fracking
Ann Marshall, Durham CCAP
Doug O'Malley, Director, Environment New Jersey
Arianne Elinich, Founder, Bucks County CCAP
Michael Chojnicki, President, Sullivan Alliance for Sustainable Development
Thomas Adams, Chair, Preserve Montgomery County Virginia
Todd Larsen, Executive Co-Director, Green America
Jenny Lisak, Director, Pennsylvania Alliance for Clean Water and Air
Jean Su, Associate Conservation Director, Center for Biological Diversity
Hannah Adams, Deputy Director, Bold Alliance
Tara Sumner, Vice President, Advocates for Springfield, NY
Gusti Bogok, Chair, The Green Sanctuary Committee, Community Church of New York, UU
Matt Shapiro, President, New Jersey Tenants Organization
Bob Shavelson, Inletkeeper, Cook Inletkeeper
Sandra Kissam, Chair, Orange Residents Against Pilgrim Pipelines
Natalie Pien, Chair, Green Team, Unitarian Universalist Church of Loudoun; Conservation Chair, Sierra Club, Great Falls Group, VA, 350 Loudoun
David Moloney, Chairperson, New Hampshire Pipeline Awareness
B. Arrindell, Director, Damascus Citizens for Sustainability
Wes Gillingham, Associate Director, Catskill Mountainkeeper
Joe Levine, Director, Citizens for Water
Jim Vogt, President, Aquashicola/Pohopoco Watershed Conservancy
Buck, Moorhead, Chair, NYH2o
Linda Faraci, Co-chair, Monmouth County Democratic Progressive Caucus
Vera Scroggins, Director, Citizens for Clean Water
Ken Dolsky, Founder, Already Devalued and Devastated Homeowners of Parsippany
Diane Wexler, Co-Founder, Northjersey Pipeline Walkers
Suzannah Glidden, Co-founder, Stop the Algonquin Pipeline Expansion
John V. Dennis, President, Chris Dennis Environment Foundation
Kathleen Maher, Treasurer, Bus For Progress
Peter Gamba, President, Committee to Preserve the Finger Lakes
Paul Ferrazzi, Executive Director, Citizens Coalition for a Safe Community
Maura Stephans, Cofounder, Coalition to Protect New York
Ken Dolsky, Lead Organizer, Coalition Against the Pilgrim Pipeline (CAPP) New Jersey
Robert Bonardant, Member, Executive Committee, Protect Our Water Heritage Rights
Donald Hebbard, President/Founding Member, Compressor Free Franklin
Jackie Schramm, Coordinator, Franciscan Response to Fracking
Andrea Miller, Executive Director, People Demanding Action
Nat Arkin, Planning Group Member, Pequannock Seniors/Indivisible
Ben Glenzer, Vice President, Sustainable Loudoun
Debaura James, Representative, SEED (Securing Economic and Energy Democracy) for SW NM
Tish Molloy, President, Guardians of the Brandywine
Jenni Siri, Co-Founder, Our Revolution New Mexico
Jenni Siri, Founder, Frack Free Four Corners
Gay Nicholson, President, Sustainable Tompkins