

To Congressman Frank Pallone:

We are the Central Jersey Climate Coalition, an alliance of students, faculty, civic organizations and community members who are demanding action across all levels of government to avoid climate catastrophe. As the Chairman of the Energy and Commerce Committee, you hold immense power in setting the legislative agenda on climate.

The Green New Deal, the kind of bold legislation that is needed to prepare us in response to a rapidly changing climate, is being stalled, in part, by your committee's refusal to hold a hearing on the resolution. The alternative you have proposed to the Green New Deal puts a net-zero emissions deadline at 2050, even though the IPCC and leading climate scientists demonstrate that we need to make drastic reductions by 2030 in order to stay below the crucial threshold of 1.5 degrees of warming.

Earlier this year, you argued that a ban on fossil fuel campaign donations was "[the wrong way to go.](#)" despite the fact that extractive industries have spent hundreds of millions of dollars to spread doubt and misinformation, corrupt our political process, and block any action on climate change. The right way to go is to recognize climate change for what it is--the most existential crisis in human history, one that requires truly transformational legislation, and leaders that are dedicated to fighting for these laws and policies. We believe you can rise to the occasion. In order to do this we demand that you:

- **Hold a fair hearing on the means of implementing a strong Green New Deal.** We are beyond the point of compromises like the one you and other democratic leaders have proposed. Continued stalling on bold climate action, and continued support for a 2050 deadline on net-zero emissions, fails to recognize the aggressive role that the United States must play in reducing emissions if we want to meet global targets. As one of the most advanced and developed economies in the world, the U.S. has the means and resources to make a rapid and just transition to 100% renewable energy by 2030, we just need the political will to do so. Holding hearings on a strong Green New Deal will begin this process.
- **Support a strong Green New Deal.** In addition to holding hearings, you can become a true champion for a strong Green New Deal and push for the legislation beyond what any other democratic leader has done thus far. We demand a strong Green New Deal that includes a ban on fracking, an end to fossil fuel exports and subsidies, and a fair and just transition to 100% renewable power generation and zero carbon transportation by 2030.
- **Return campaign contributions from fossil fuel industries.** In the last election cycle, you took roughly \$15,000 from oil and gas companies. If you truly support a sustainable future, it's time to stop letting the fossil fuel industry set the legislative agenda and start focusing on the communities on the frontlines of the climate crisis, including people in the 6th district, many of whom were devastated by Hurricane Sandy and subsequent natural disasters. This money should be returned, and we also demand that you

**impose a moratorium on all future fossil fuel donations.** Fundamentally, abolishing the influence of fossil fuel companies in our political process is a matter of reclaiming democracy from a corporate class that has concentrated power to advance a destructive mission of putting short-term profits over the public good. Any kind of meaningful action on climate change cannot occur as long as the fossil fuel industry continues its stranglehold on our political system.

The next generation will have to grapple with your failure to adequately address the crisis at hand. Minor tinkering and band-aid solutions, like the plan that you have proposed, are simply off the table. Because a solution to a crisis that seeks to exist within a system that is directly causing the crisis is, at best, a distraction, and at worst, a plan that locks us down the path of climate catastrophe.

What we need now is a complete paradigm shift in virtually every area of society. You, Congressman Pallone, can be a leader in this shift. When 2050 does come along, what will we think of you? Will we know you as a politician who had the chance to take bold action on climate, but squandered it for opportunism and donations from fossil fuel companies? Or, will we regard you as a truly transformational leader, someone who confronted our most pressing crisis and ushered in a new era of stewardship and solidarity? The choice is yours, Congressman Pallone, but know this: everything is at stake, and the grassroots pressure that this coalition represents will only continue to grow and escalate if we don't see meaningful change from you and your committee.

Our house is on fire--it's time to act like it.

Sincerely,  
The Central Jersey Climate Coalition