

Solar Access for All - Joint Statement

CLIMATE DEAL COULD BRING BENEFITS OF SOLAR AND CLEAN ENERGY TO MILLIONS, LOWERING ENERGY BILLS AND EMISSIONS

WASHINGTON, DC—Last week, the Senate Democratic leadership announced the Inflation Reduction Act that, if passed, would be the largest U.S. investment in climate and clean energy. The bill, though imperfect, would lower barriers to solar access, create good paying jobs, invest in underserved and overburdened communities, and put the country closer to achieving our climate targets.

The deal is indeed a compromise that includes objectionable handouts to the fossil fuel industry. Nevertheless, it contains many major steps towards climate equity. It includes \$60 billion for environmental justice programs and several measures that directly reduce greenhouse gas pollution and benefit low-income residents, tribes, and territories like Puerto Rico. For example, it creates a new \$7 billion EPA grant program to enable deployment of residential solar in lower-income and environmental justice communities.

The package also includes the extension and expansion of clean energy tax credits, which are foundational for clean energy technology deployment in the US. In addition to extending the solar tax credits for 10 years, it makes the credits more equitable and accessible. Specifically, this legislation:

- Creates a two-year 20% additional tax credit for 3.6GW of solar benefiting select low-income residents;
- Makes the tax credit directly available to non-profit organizations, and;
- Includes the costs to interconnect a solar system to the grid as an eligible expense for the first time, a change that could help overcome a major barrier to community solar deployment.

While we acknowledge the deal has flaws that may put frontline communities in harm's way in the coming years, we remain committed to supporting our environmental justice allies and continuing the fight towards 100 percent clean energy. The agreement is an important step towards tackling climate change, and the legislation must be passed and signed into law without further delay. All members of Congress must act with the urgency this moment requires and send the bill to President Biden's desk as soon as possible.

Quotes:

“The solar and clean energy investments and incentives in the Inflation Reduction Act will boost local solar development, create jobs, and advance opportunity in communities typically overburdened by pollution,” said **Jeff Cramer, CEO of the Coalition for Community Solar Access**. “Americans will have more opportunity for distributed generation like community solar that will cut energy bills for American families, businesses, and the most vulnerable among us.”

“The Inflation Reduction Act in Congress, combined with President Biden's actions taken last week on clean energy, will unlock access to community solar programs and help millions of low-income families who are hardest hit by both the climate crisis and high energy costs. Especially when many Americans are suffering through dangerous and expensive heatwaves, it is critical to quickly and equitably expand clean energy access for all,” said **Jake Kornack, Associate Legislative Representative at Earthjustice**.

“This bill, though not perfect, represents an historic investment in clean energy for environmental justice communities. It will bolster solar deployment and domestic manufacturing while reducing greenhouse gas emissions, creating jobs, and lowering monthly energy costs for working families across the nation,” said **Odette Mucha, Vote Solar Federal Liaison**. “We applaud the Congressional leadership and staff for their tireless efforts to reach an agreement, and we plan to celebrate when it passes, while continuing to fight fossil fuel expansion at the state level.”

“The clean energy investments included in the Inflation Reduction Act will be transformational for Appalachian communities seeking to remake their economies as the coal industry continues to decline,” said **Chelsea Barnes, Legislative Director for Appalachian Voices**. “The investments targeted at environmental justice, low-income and historic energy-producing communities are a huge win and will help coal-impacted communities become a vital part of the clean energy economy of the future. We urge Congress to act quickly to pass the Inflation Reduction Act.”

“This bill represents a crucial step forward in delivering promised clean energy investments through community-powered solutions that will boost local solar development and create jobs in communities typically overburdened by pollution,” said **Andrea Marpillero-Coloina, Sustainable Communities Program Director at GreenLatinos**. “In addition, lowering energy costs for families and increasing availability of tax credits is critical to quickly and equitably expand clean energy access for Latinos – who overall pay higher utility costs than the average consumer – and in all communities.”

“The Inflation Reduction Act, if enacted, will mark a turning point toward a cleaner, healthier, more affordable energy system that meets the needs of everyday Americans,” said **Andie Wyatt, Policy Director and Legal Counsel for GRID Alternatives**. “There has never been a more important time to make investments in transformative and community-powered solutions that move our society towards fairness for current and future generations.”

“For decades, solar energy has been out of reach for far too many Americans, especially people of color, low-income communities, and U.S. territories including Puerto Rico. The agreement reached by Senator Schumer and Senator Manchin will help connect millions of people to solar energy through new and expanded grants and tax credits, with direct pay provisions enabling access to these tax provisions to many entities for the first time. We look forward to seeing this bill become law,” said **Laura M. Esquivel, Vice President, Federal Policy and Advocacy, Hispanic Federation**

“We are excited to see that the Senate Democrats have come to an agreement on this historic package which will allow more communities to access affordable, renewable solar energy at a time when they need it the most. This deal, and the actions announced by the Administration yesterday, will not only help meet the climate goals we've set out but will also lower costs for families and build a healthier, more equitable clean energy future for all,” said **Art Terrazas, Government Affairs Advocate, League of Conservation Voters**

“The deal is a win for consumers, a win for clean energy workers, a win for our economy, a win for environmental justice, and a win for the climate. The Senate should move swiftly to approve the Inflation Reduction Act and the House should quickly follow. We commend President Biden and Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer for staying at the negotiating table and for remaining steadfast in working to fulfill the President’s commitments to expanding clean energy and tackling the climate crisis,” said **Jaime Horn, spokesperson for Local Solar for All**.

“We applaud the President for his steadfast climate leadership & urge Congress to ensure that this bill is approved in a way that directly guarantees progress on Puerto Rico’s path to 100% renewables- a fully decarbonized future fundamentally built upon the limitless, clean, local and affordable solar energy that bathes our island year-round,” said **Javier Rúa-Jovet, Chief Policy Officer at the Solar & Energy Storage Association of Puerto Rico (SESA)**.

“This legislative package will help more American families take control of where their electricity comes from, with solar power. Thousands of solar supporters from across the country and of all political stripes contacted their Congressmembers to urge them to

support these smart policies. When solar supporters join together, we win.” – **Anya Schoolman, Executive Director, Solar United Neighbors**

“The Inflation Reduction Act agreement reached by Senate leadership compounded with the steps taken by the White House will alleviate energy burdens for low- and moderate-income families across this country. While we are disappointed with the number of fossil fuel concessions, the bill will make solar more accessible for traditionally excluded communities” said **Yesenia Rivera, Executive Director, Solstice Initiative**. “Direct Pay, through the Solar ITC for nonprofits, is an opportunity to cultivate energy justice. In the future, we hope that this tax credit will be expanded to prioritize low- and moderate-income households.”

“We are pleased to see investments in solar access for low-income communities in the Inflation Reduction Act. We have been advocating residential solar development in environmental justice communities for years,” said **Naadiya Hutchinson, Government Affairs Manager at WE ACT for Environmental Justice**. “Clean energy investments that focus on renewable energy, like this solar grant program, help address the disproportionate impacts that climate change has on these communities while providing jobs and other benefits these communities deserve.”