

August 1, 2019

Honorable Roy Cooper  
Governor of North Carolina  
116 West Jones Street  
Raleigh, NC 27603

Re: Stopping the expansion of dirty fuels in NC

Dear Governor Cooper,

We the undersigned environmental, community, and justice organizations are writing to express concern about the ongoing and expanding damage that the climate crisis poses to our communities, our children's future, and our state's economy. Witnessing that your administration's actions to address the effects of climate change, though well-intentioned, have been inadequate so far, we respectfully request a meeting with you to discuss the issues and solutions outlined below.

We appreciate your willingness to embrace climate change as evidenced by your participation in the US Climate Alliance and your signing of an Executive Order on Climate Change (EO-80) last year. A recent public opinion poll conducted by Yale and George Mason University following Hurricane Florence found that 60% of voters in our state are worried about climate change and want the government to take action.

However, as a Governor who has publicly committed to advance clean, truly renewable energy and to build climate resiliency in North Carolina, voters expect you to go beyond words and internal politics and take immediate, meaningful action to address this global crisis. We, as an alliance, are becoming increasingly concerned that your Administration is enabling the expansion of dirty fuels such as fracked gas and biomass/wood pellets that are accelerating climate change while inflicting direct harm on low-income communities and communities of color.

The science is clear that the proposed Atlantic Coast fracked gas Pipeline, Duke Energy's proposed Liquid Natural Gas storage facility, Duke's plans for new gas-fired power plants, and the ongoing expansion of Enviva's wood pellet production will not help solve the climate crisis. In fact, they will make it worse, while placing economically depressed rural communities across North Carolina at an even greater risk. Many of these communities, already suffering from too much pollution and from a variety of destructive industries such as industrial agriculture, industrial animal feedlots, industrial forestry, coal ash and other hazardous waste and dirty power plants, have also been harmed by the most recent extreme flooding events.

In this moment, failure to take courageous action to stop these dirty energy projects from expanding across our state will significantly undermine your ability to meet the targets of 40%

emissions reductions for North Carolina as set forth in EO-80. Both fracked gas and biomass produce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions as harmful as coal. A failure to take every action available to stop these projects will further compromise our rural communities' health and ability to withstand ongoing and intensifying extreme weather events, thereby eroding the public's trust in your leadership on climate change and commitment to a clean energy future.

At this critical moment in time we are troubled by what seems to have become a pattern of claiming emission reductions without taking into consideration the full range of dangerous GHG emissions associated with natural gas and industrial logging, an omission promoted heavily by Duke Energy, Enviva, PNG, Dominion, PSNC, and other polluters. There has been no publicly visible indication that your administration recognizes that allowing ongoing expansions in gas and wood pellets will negatively impact the State's ability to meet the target emission reductions as set forth in EO-80. In the absence of a full accounting for these emissions, claims of GHG emission reductions continue to promote a position that badly misleads the public, ignores science and promotes the interests of the very polluting industries that are the root cause of climate change, environmental injustice and economic inequity.

These times require strong leadership and a willingness to exercise all regulatory and political authority within your purview to hold industry accountable. Millions of people are already being harmed, and recent science underscores that the window of opportunity to begin slowing the climate crisis is short – less than a decade – and that we must catalyze rapid and far-reaching transformation across the energy and land sectors of the economy. It is no longer enough to incrementally reduce GHG emissions, especially when the technologies and economics are available to make sweeping, positive changes.

We must bring emissions of all GHGs to near zero, while simultaneously actively removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere through letting our forests grow older. At the same time, we must invest in natural and other infrastructure that can help communities better cope with the impacts of extreme weather. Truly clean energy and forest protection are not only critical climate solutions, but they can also create thousands of green jobs and help build equity throughout the economy.

We therefore stand united in calling for:

- **A Clean Energy Plan** that commits North Carolina to 100% clean, renewable energy and the decarbonization of the energy economy in NC with a halt to the expansion of dirty extractive energy infrastructure such as fracked gas pipelines, offshore drilling operations, industrial biogas and biomass/wood pellet facilities.
- **A plan for enhanced land resiliency and pollution remediation** in North Carolina that is firmly based in environmental justice, expanding protections for standing natural forests and holding polluters fully accountable for toxic cleanup.

- **A just transition plan for building a clean, green economy.** This should include a funding mechanism for job training programs prioritizing the most impacted and marginalized communities and a strategy for creating quality jobs that provide union scale wages, benefits and job protections.

There are immediate actions that must be taken, beyond what your administration is currently doing, in order to put North Carolina on the right moral, economic and ecological path. We request a chance to meet with you to discuss actions that address the issues outlined above in hopes that we can work cooperatively with you to help North Carolina rise to this urgent and unprecedented challenge.

We look forward to your earliest possible reply to Danna Smith [danna@dogwoodalliance.org](mailto:danna@dogwoodalliance.org) and Jim Warren [jim@ncwarn.org](mailto:jim@ncwarn.org).

Sincerely,

Jerome Wagner, Lead Organizer  
350 Charlotte

Karen Bearden, Coordinator  
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Tami Schwerin, Executive Director  
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Varshini Prakash, co-founder and Executive Director  
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Cc: Jeremy Tarr, Policy Advisor for Environment, Energy and Transportation