

Dear Memphis City Council,

The undersigned organizations are writing today to encourage this council to support Councilman Edmund Ford, Sr. and Councilman Dr. Jeff Warren's Resolution Opposing the Byhalia Connection Pipeline. We believe that this council's vote to oppose the Pipeline is pivotal to the health and well being of this community, our country and our climate.

We believe you all have the power to uphold the values of justice deeply rooted in our democratic system and in the hopes of the people of Memphis. This project is a manifestation of the interlocking injustices of systemic racism, systemic poverty, and ecological devastation. This upcoming Tuesday, we believe that collectively this body can decide to disrupt these systems that have plagued our communities, our cities, and our nation for too long.

This proposed crude oil pipeline funded by the fossil fuel corporations Valero Energy Corporation and Plains All American is burdening the people of Memphis and Mississippi, and pushing our climate closer to the point of no return, for the profit motives of corporations. It is past time to put people over corporate gains and to hear the cries of the people in communities across the world. In Memphis, it seems the cry is clear: "No Oil in Our Soil."

This crude oil pipeline is a textbook case of environmental racism, injustice, and environmental degradation. In targeting the Southwest Memphis neighborhood, and the greater Memphis area, this project hopes to force low-wealth Black communities to carry this billion-dollar corporation's oil barrels on their backs with no public benefit. In the US, between 1986 and 2013, [there have been nearly 8,000 incidents of pipeline leaks \(around 300 per year\)](#). If this pipeline were to leak it would contaminate the local aquifer, which provides drinking water to Memphis and the North Mississippi counties of DeSoto and Marshall, with carcinogenic crude oil. Not only is the Byhalia Connection Pipeline plan proposing the construction of a high-pressure crude oil pipeline above your city's water aquifer, it is along an active earthquake zone, greatly increasing the potential for a spill. In the case of an earthquake, the impacts to the community from this project would be devastating.

We have seen the hydrogeologic reporting from Dr. Douglas J. Cosler that "[one pound of crude oil can contaminate 25,000,000 gallons of groundwater...](#)" The route of the pipeline cuts through the Davis Wellfield, which is operated by Memphis Light, Gas & Water and is in an area known to be vulnerable to groundwater contamination. The Davis Wellfield provides drinking water for several predominantly Black neighborhoods in southwest Memphis.

Beyond the immediate hazards that the proposed Byhalia crude oil pipeline poses to our drinking water, it also would be another significant driver of fossil fuel consumption, and in turn, climate-polluting greenhouse gas emissions. As you know, our society is facing an existential crisis from climate change, and it is imperative that our elected leaders do everything in their

power to stop expanding fossil fuel infrastructure and transition to clean, renewable energy. Just in the last few days, [international press have been reporting on the alarming public health impacts of the fossil fuel industry](#), which accounted for *one-in-five* global deaths in 2018. As usual, it is people of color and the poor who are the most burdened by the impacts of the fossil fuel industry.

Last fall, Southwest Memphis community members came together to form Memphis Communities Against the Pipeline (MCAP) to condemn the pipeline and put pressure on local officials to support their fight to put an end to the proposed pipeline. MCAP has garnered support from landowners, community associations in Westwood, Whitehaven, Boxtown, West Junction and Walker Homes, Protect Our Aquifer, Sierra Club - Tennessee Chapter, Sowing Justice, and The Climate Reality Project: Memphis and Mid-South Regional Chapter, and the National Black Environmental Justice Network. In addition to those organizations, they have support from several elected officials including the United States Congressman, Steve Cohen. Like the historic Black community of Union Hill in Virginia [that organized and won against the proposed Atlantic Coast Pipeline](#), MCAP is poised to do what it takes to protect communities in Memphis. We hope that you all, as elected officials, will put your citizen's health, safety, and futures first.

Although the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers provided its recommendation for the fast-track permit for this crude oil pipeline's permit, they made clear that local government and local utilities will have the final say on protecting the people's water and interests. We hope you will raise your voice to end the injustices that are being perpetrated on the backs of the people of this city. We hope your vote and actions will be to oppose this pipeline as Councilmen Ford, Sr. and Dr. Warren are proposing. It is not only the best decision but also the morally just one.

Thank you for your consideration.

Alleia Bakker, Environmental Justice Issue Leader, Memphis Interfaith Coalition for Action and Hope (MICAH) Youth Council

Allie Rosenbluth, Campaigns Director, Rogue Climate

Allison Stillman, Chapter Chair, Climate Reality Project Lansing Chapter

Amanda Wilkerson, Member, Earth Ethics Action

Andrea Miller, Executive Director, People Demanding Action

Anita Forrester, Chapter Chair, Climate Reality Project Lehigh Valley Chapter

Anna-Marta Visky, Chair, Our Revolution Monmouth, NJ

Antonio Blair, Activist, Fight for 15 Memphis

Barbara Jarmoska, President, Project CoffeeHouse

Basav Sen, Climate Policy Director, Institute for Policy Studies Climate Policy Program

Bill Lyons, Co-organizer, Columbus Community Bill of Rights

Cailie Kafura, Organizer, Rising Tide Chicago

Cami Villanueva, Co-Leader, Sunrise Corvallis

Dr. Carnita Atwater, Executive Director, New Chicago Community Partnership Revitalization  
CDC

Carol M. Folan, Organizer, FRF (Franciscan Response to Fossil Fuels)

Carolyn Harding, Organizer, Radioactive Waste Alert

Catherine Coleman Flowers, Founder and Director, Center for Rural Enterprise and  
Environmental Justice

Cheryl Barnds, Co-Chair, Rapid Shift Network

Christine Canaly, Director, San Luis Valley Ecosystem Council

Claire Langley, Vice President, Climate Advisers

Codi Norred, Executive Director, Georgia Interfaith Power and Light

Colby Minifie, Leader, Climate Reality Project

Collin Rees, Senior Analyst, Oil Change International

Courtney Kaltenbach, Co-Director, University of Oregon Climate Justice League

Cristina Hubbard, Executive Director, Forest Web

Dan Wahpepah, Co-director, Red Earth Descendants

Dani Schulman, Policy Researcher, E3G

Daniel R Wallace, Director, The Tech Wolves Center for Excellence in Art and Life

Danna Smith, Executive Director, Dogwood Alliance

Dany Sigwalt, Executive Director, Power Shift Network

David Page Jr., President, Westwood Neighborhood Association

Rev. Dawn Cooley, Executive Director, Kentucky Interfaith Power & Light

Dean Barone, Chair, Climate Reality Project Houston Chapter

Dineen O'Rourke, Campaign Manager, 350PDX

Donna Pitt, Coordinator, Preserve Giles County

Doris Deberry Bradshaw, Executive Director, Defense Depot Memphis TN- Concerned Citizens Committee

Duffy-Marie Arnoult, Co-Chair, The Climate Reality Project: Memphis and Mid-South Regional Chapter

Dylan Plummer, Co-Founder, Breach Collective

Elaine Tanner, Program Director, Friends For Environmental Justice

Elijah Cetas, Campaign Organizer, Portland Harbor Community Coalition

Elizabeth Gilbert, Climate & Environmental Justice Coordinator, Florida Student Power Network

Ellen E Barfield, Coordinating Committee Member, Beyond Extreme Energy

Emily Fulmer, Co-chair, Indivisible Memphis

Gwendolyn Wrushen Nelson, President, Walker Homes West Junction Neighborhood Association

Harriet Shugarman, Executive Director, ClimateMama

James Rhodes, CEO, Rhodes Incorporated

Jane Kleeb, Founder and Director, Bold Alliance

Jason Miller, Director of Campaigns and Development, Franciscan Action Network

Jay Monteverde, Program Director, Namati US Environmental Justice Program

Jed Lee, Student Organizer, Students of Color Environmental Collective at UC Berkeley

Jennifer Crosslin, Co-president, Cherokee Concerned Citizens

Sister Joan Brown, Executive Director, New Mexico Interfaith Power and Light

Jodi Lasseter, Co-Convener, North Carolina Climate Justice Collective

Joe Womack, Executive Director, Clean, Healthy, Educated, Safe & Sustainable Communities

Ka'ila Farrell-Smith, Co-Director, Rural & Tribal Community Director, Signal Fire

Kaleia Martin, Community Organizer, DisruptTransform, LLC

Karen Orenstein, Director of Climate and Energy Program, Friends of the Earth U.S.

Katherine Bini, Steering Committee Member, Metro N.Y. Catholic Climate Movement

Katy Eymann, President, Citizens for Renewables

Kelsey Baker, Organizer, Portland Rising Tide

Ken Dolsky, Co-Founder, Coalition Against Pilgrim Pipeline - NJ

Kevin Campbell, Director, Mountain Lakes Preservation Alliance

Kimberly Baker, Executive Director, Klamath Forest Alliance

Kimi Wei, CEO, The Wei LLC

Kizzy Jones, Co-Founder, Memphis Community Against the Pipeline

Marie Venner, Co-Chair, Businesses for a Livable Climate

Marion (Penny) Freistadt, Core Group, 350 New Orleans

Marquita Bradshaw, Executive Director, Sowing Justice

Martha Camacho Rodriguez, Educator/Director, Social Eco Education LA

Mary Collier, Hub Coordinator, Sunrise Lewisburg

Mary Gutierrez, Director, Earth Action, Inc

Matthew Wolf, Analyst, Wave

Rev. Michael Malcom, Founder/Executive Director, People's Justice Council

Nicholas Tippins, Organizer, Sunrise Eugene

Ntebo Mokuena, Volunteer Organizer, 350 DC

Patricia Alessandrini, Secretary, Bergen County Green Party

Patricia Hine, President, 350 Eugene

Paula Brooks, Environmental Justice Coordinator, Indianapolis Environmental Justice Council

Paula Hood, Co-Director, Blue Mountains Biodiversity Project

Pedro Evenezer, Hub Coordinator, Sunrise Beaverton

Peter Digre, Chair, Climate Reality New Orleans Chapter

Queen Quet, Founder, Gullah/Geechee Sea Island Coalition

Rebekah Sale, Executive Director, Property Rights and Pipeline Center

Robert Cross, President, Responsible Drilling Alliance

Robert K. Musil, Ph.D., M.P.H., President & CEO, Rachel Carson Council

Robin Schneider, Executive Director, Texas Campaign for the Environment

Roger Knudson, Ph. D., Chapter Chair, Climate Reality Project Dallas Fort Worth Chapter

Sally Jane Gellert, Member, Occupy Bergen County (New Jersey)

Sandy Field, Chair, Climate Reality Project Susquehanna Valley Chapter

Sarah Hadskey, Architect, SAM studio

Scott Banbury, Conservation Program Coordinator, Tennessee Sierra Club

Sylvia Broude, Executive Director, Community Action Works

Tamela Trussell, CEO, TLC Education

Tammy Murphy, Medical Advocacy Director, Physicians for Social Responsibility Pennsylvania

Thomas Wheeler, Executive Director, Environmental Protection Information Center

Tim Guinee, Legislative Action Coordinator, New York Climate Reality Chapters Coalition

Tina Johnson, Director, National Black Environmental Justice Network

Tina Weishaus, Co-Convener, DivestNJ Coalition

Ward Archer, President, Protect Our Aquifer

Dr. Yvonne D. Nelson, President, Whitehaven Community Development Corporation