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As So-Called ‘Climate Leaders’ Tout Cap-and-Trade, New Report Details Racial and Economic Injustice of Pollution Trading Schemes

WASHINGTON – New analysis published today details the disproportionate burdens of air and water contamination and serious human health effects placed on low-income communities of color by market-based pollution trading schemes. [The report](#), from the advocacy organizations Food & Water Watch and Greenaction for Health and Environmental Justice, shows that under many of these plans – like California’s notorious “cap-and-trade” program – localized pollution and public health impacts actually *increase* in lower-income minority communities.

Meanwhile, California Governor Jerry Brown was at the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change’s 23rd Conference of the Parties last week, touting his state’s cap-and-trade program and urging European leaders to adopt similar policies. Elsewhere, political leaders in states throughout the country have publicly endorsed pollution trading plans or indicated interest in exploring them.

Polluters have traditionally sited their facilities in lower-income communities of color, resulting in a disproportionate, localized environmental and public health burden. The new report, *Paying to Pollute – The Environmental Injustice of Pollution Trading* – illustrates how contemporary market-based programs tend to further concentrate polluting emissions in lower-income areas, while also often failing to reduce overall emissions under the programs at large.

“As a member of the Appropriations and Budget Committees, I’m fighting to ensure that our government understands the reality of climate change and takes action to address it. We must face the facts: the pollution that damages our environment has a direct impact on our public health. And too often, communities of color have been forced to live in the most polluted, contaminated areas, causing asthma and severe illnesses among children, the elderly and our most vulnerable,” said **Congresswoman Barbara Lee (D-CA)**. “It’s time for us all to demand environmental justice and ensure that every community is protected from the devastating impacts of pollution and climate change. It is a moral imperative for Congress to take immediate action to end our reliance on fossil fuels.”

“Pollution trading schemes like cap-and-trade unjustly burden lower-income communities of color. This is a fact,” said **Wenonah Hauter, executive director of Food & Water Watch**. “So many of us are rightfully desperate for solutions to our climate crisis, but market-based policies won’t save us. The only real way to significantly reduce carbon pollution is to stop producing it. We must move off fossil fuels now.”

“Low income and communities of color have a right to clean air and a healthy environment,” said **Bradley Angel, executive director of Greenaction for Health and Environmental Justice**. “Fossil fuels need to be kept in the ground, not traded to help giant corporate polluters make money off of the health of our communities and our planet.”

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