

Attorney General Raoul Calls On Congress To Address Climate Crisis, Environmental Injustice

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CHICAGO – Attorney General Kwame Raoul, as part of a coalition of 20 attorneys general, urged Congress to respond to the climate crisis and advance environmental justice by funding critical programs in budget reconciliation legislation.

[In a letter](#) to Democratic Congressional leaders, Raoul and the coalition called on Congress to pass infrastructure legislation and to allocate funding in the upcoming reconciliation bill that addresses the rapid transition to a clean energy economy, climate change, and the environmental injustices faced by low-income communities, communities of color, and Native American and indigenous communities. Raoul and the coalition urge Congress to fund actions that will substantially cut greenhouse gases – thereby preventing more dire climate change effects – and confront longstanding environmental injustice.

“With climate change threatening our health, environment, and economy, it is imperative that Congress respond to this crisis by including clean energy and climate change initiatives in the budget reconciliation package,” Raoul said. “This legislation would help communities throughout Illinois upgrade water infrastructure and improve air quality. I urge Congress to include funding for these programs in the reconciliation legislation, and I will continue to support efforts to address the devastating effects of climate change.”

All Americans deserve equal rights to clean air, clean water, and a safe and healthy environment. However, low-income communities, communities of color, and Native American and indigenous communities are too often denied these rights, enduring disproportionate burdens of pollution, climate change, or other serious health and environmental harms. Those harms are only becoming more severe, as witnessed by the catastrophic storms and wildfires experienced this summer.

Raoul and the coalition argue that Congress should address the climate emergency by prioritizing investment in the following specific areas that – while broadly beneficial to improving the lives of all Americans – are critical steps in ending the legacy of inequity that afflicts marginalized and underserved communities:

- Ensure substantial additional funding to reduce climate change pollution at its source and foster climate resilience.
- Improve critical quality water and drinking water services, including providing adequate funding to ensure that all lead service lines are replaced.
- Invest in air quality monitoring in at-risk communities.
- Address methane pollution.
- Increase access to and investment in clean energy, including enacting the proposed Clean Energy Payment Program.
- Fund energy efficiency programs for schools and affordable housing.
- Accelerate the electrification of transportation and the transport of goods.
- Support programs that advance workforce development and pollution reduction and improve the health of our communities.

Additionally, Raoul and the coalition contend that in order for the Biden administration to deliver on its Justice40 promise, Congress must ensure that 40% of improvements funded by the budget reconciliation bill benefit disadvantaged communities.

Joining Raoul in sending the letter are the attorneys general of California, Connecticut, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Hawaii, Iowa, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, New Mexico, New York, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, and Wisconsin.