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Attention:

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A Better Direction Calling for a Nuclear-Free Clean Energy Future

This sign-on letter is created in collaboration between [Michigan Environmental Justice Coalition \(MEJC\)](#) and [Citizens' Resistance At Fermi Two \(CRAFT\)](#).

As the Michigan Legislature considers several measures in an attempt to reduce carbon emissions, we, the undersigned, feel that it is imperative that our elected leaders pursue reduction methods that do not recreate and perpetuate past environmental injustices, but rather seek solutions that are informed and led by communities that have seen the worst impacts of climate change and the pollution that causes it, particularly Black, Brown, Indigenous and low-income communities.

We have serious concerns about climate and environmental legislation that the Michigan Senate is considering that would subsidize and expand the use of nuclear power in Michigan under the guise of providing "clean energy."

In reality, nuclear power is borne on the health impacts that communities living near plants suffer, including increased rates of cancer, lower life expectancy and [more](#). The enormous cost to build and maintain nuclear plants diverts resources from community-led renewable energy solutions. And the risks involved to communities that have already seen devastating environmental impacts cannot be ignored. Nuclear power is not safe, and it cannot be a part of an environmentally Just Transition from fossil fuels.

Indigenous and local communities have organized for years against the health disparities caused by the Fermi-2 plant in Michigan. Around 800 tons of spent fuel are now in a degrading waste pool, threatening local residents and ecosystems. It is imperative that the Michigan Legislature include impacted community voices into any energy

legislation being considered, especially legislation that would subsidize or expand the use of old or new nuclear power.

We urge the Michigan Legislature to consider these particular areas of concern:

1. Nuclear power must not be considered a “clean” or “renewable” energy.

Nuclear power requires an intensive and emissions-heavy effort to build and sustain, and its waste is often dumped on Black, Brown, Indigenous and low-income communities who suffer severe health impacts. [In no way should it be considered “clean” or “emissions-free.”](#)

Yet legislation now under Michigan Senate consideration would allow massive subsidies to wealthy corporations like DTE, who are already responsible for an array of environmental injustices, for expanding nuclear power. For example, Senate Bill 271, as currently written, considers nuclear power a form of “renewable” energy that the state can use to meet its climate goals. These subsidies must go to 100% renewable, pollution-free energy sources - we refuse to accept more public handouts to fossil fuel polluters in the name of “clean energy.”

Discussions around re-opening the Palisades reactor are especially concerning. Re-opening the Palisades plant over the strong objections of local communities would fly in the face of the legislature and Governor’s stated commitment to environmental justice. We must stop building nuclear plants and creating nuclear waste.

2. The Michigan Legislature’s creation of a nuclear caucus is a step in the wrong direction.

[Nuclear power is not an environmentally just solution to climate change or pollution.](#) The Michigan Legislature must not devote the people’s time to consideration of an energy source that has historically been the source of grave environmental injustice, burdens communities with dangerous waste which there is no safe way to store, and imposes significant economic costs.

We call on the Michigan Legislature to work meaningfully with communities that are on the ground and face the impacts of climate change and pollution every day, not create an [industry-insider caucus](#) that shuts out community voices. No “feasibility study” can be complete without robust community involvement.

3. There must be swifter action and accountability regarding wastewater disposal and thermal limits in National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits.

For years, nuclear power plants in Michigan, including Fermi-2, have operated with loose accountability when it comes to disposing of coolant water. Much of this water is discharged directly into local waterways. It can carry heavy metals, radionuclides and other toxic chemicals, causing [severe impacts](#) on communities and ecosystems.

We call on our leaders to employ swift action and accountability to nuclear power operators like DTE for any discharges that don’t comply with the NPDES permit, and we ask that the EGLE [make DTE comply with directives from the EPA](#) to reduce the [thermal limits](#) that regulate the temperature of discharged water.

Communities that have seen the harmful and devastating effects of pollution and climate change, including decreased life expectancy, worse health outcomes and a lack of access to safe, pollution free lands and waters, must be at the forefront when solutions to climate change are being discussed and decided upon. We call on our legislators to listen to, engage with, and respect the voices of these communities as they work towards legislation to address our shared climate and environmental crisis.