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Securing Environmental Justice for All

How the Biden Administration Is Fighting for Clean Air and Water, Climate Protection, and Healthy Communities for Every American

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Introduction and summary

No administration in history has done more than President Joe Biden's to ensure that all people—regardless of race, income, or ZIP code—live in healthy and safe communities. The Biden administration has advanced an unprecedented climate, clean energy, and environmental justice agenda to accelerate progress toward securing access to clean air and safe water, affordable and clean renewable energy, and climate-resilient and healthy communities for all Americans.¹

In August 2022, President Biden signed into law the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), delivering historic investments to support the most ambitious climate and clean energy plan in U.S. history.² The IRA is accelerating the transition to a clean energy economy that will lower household energy costs, create good jobs, reduce planet-warming pollution, and protect communities from harmful climate change effects. In addition, the IRA invested roughly \$55 billion to reduce local pollution and improve public health and economic security in Black, brown, Indigenous, and low-income communities. (see Figure 1) Combined with the more than \$93 billion for pollution cleanup and lead pipe removal delivered by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA)—also known as the bipartisan infrastructure law³—(see Figure 2) the Biden administration is targeting at least \$148 billion to improve lives and livelihoods in disadvantaged communities.

This new funding is part of the Biden administration's Justice40 Initiative,⁴ developed in partnership with environmental justice leaders and front-line communities, which aims to deliver at least 40 percent of federal climate, clean energy, and other infrastructure investment benefits from more than 500 federal programs to low-income communities and communities of color.⁵ These benefits include healthy air quality, safe drinking water, climate-resilient affordable housing, and affordable clean energy and transportation.

The IRA and IIJA funds designated for disadvantaged communities, along with other federal investments mobilized by the Justice40 Initiative, are beginning to bring real benefits to low-income, Black, brown, and Indigenous communities

overburdened by high levels of pollution and economic and racial inequality. For example, the administration has invested more than \$11.7 billion in IIJA funds to ensure that communities in all 55 states and U.S. territories have access to safe drinking water and clean rivers, lakes, and other water resources—with plans to spend an additional \$2.3 billion from the IIJA for clean and safe water in 2024.⁶

These ambitious yet long-overdue efforts are part of the Biden administration’s far-reaching actions to advance racial justice and equity.

The administration also has invested \$3.5 billion in IIJA funds to support the cleanup of more than 150 high-priority Superfund sites, many of which have languished without funding for years.⁷ This investment also launched 96 new cleanup projects in 33 states and territories, including Arizona, Georgia, Louisiana, Michigan, Nevada, New Mexico, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, and more.⁸ According to U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Deputy Administrator Janet McCabe, “[This] funding has made it possible for EPA to initiate clean ups at every single Superfund site where construction work is ready to begin. This is an incredible milestone in our efforts to clean up and protect communities, deliver local jobs, enhance economic activity, and improve people’s lives for years to come.”⁹ In addition, the administration awarded \$1 billion in IRA funds for roughly 400 projects in all 50 states to expand parks and tree cover, reduce extreme heat risks, and improve public health and quality of life in communities.¹⁰

This report discusses how these and the Biden administration’s other historic investments are accelerating efforts to guarantee that all people can live in healthy and safe communities by 1) ensuring clean air, clean water, and a healthy climate; 2) lowering household energy costs and providing access to clean renewable energy; and 3) improving community climate resilience, transportation, and access to living-wage jobs.

Biden administration actions to prioritize healthy communities and environmental justice for all

Within days of taking office, President Biden launched the first-ever White House Environmental Justice Advisory Council (WHEJAC)¹¹ to help shape the administration’s environmental justice policies.¹² Guided by the WHEJAC, in April 2023, President Biden issued an executive order (EO) recognizing that “restoring and protecting a healthy environment — wherever people live, play, work, learn, grow, and worship — is a matter of justice and a fundamental duty that the Federal Government must uphold on behalf of all people.”¹³ The EO calls on federal agencies to redouble efforts to enforce the nation’s environmental and civil rights laws, address the deadly cumulative impacts of pollution and other stressors, and protect against climate change and other environmental hazards, which disproportionately harm low-income communities and communities of color.¹⁴

In January 2024, President Biden announced a pause on all pending approvals of liquified natural gas (LNG) facilities to consider their impacts on climate change, the economy, and national security.¹⁵ This decision was a victory not only for safeguarding Americans from a 9 to 14 percent increase in natural gas prices¹⁶ but also for protecting the health and safety of the predominantly Black communities living near LNG processing facilities and their efforts to hold the fossil fuel industry accountable for putting profits over people.

The Biden administration is also strengthening public health protections under the Clean Air Act (CAA) to reduce the harmful and costly health effects of pollution. In February 2024, the administration finalized a new lifesaving standard to reduce particulate matter, also known as soot, that will prevent serious illness, hospitalization, and premature death in communities across the country.¹⁷ In March 2024, the EPA set a stronger emissions standard for cars and light trucks to protect public health, safeguard the climate, and lower fuel and maintenance costs for drivers.¹⁸ In the coming months, the administration is also expected to finalize carbon pollution standards for coal power plants and newly built gas plants,¹⁹ as well as stronger standards to protect communities from mercury and air toxics,²⁰ toxic coal ash,²¹ and emissions from heavy-duty

vehicles.²² In addition, the administration proposed strong standards to protect public health from lead pollution, which would require utilities to remove and replace all lead pipes in every community within 10 years.²³

These ambitious yet long-overdue efforts are part of the Biden administration's far-reaching actions to advance racial justice and equity while addressing the climate crisis.²⁴ To be sure, much more work is needed to undo the brutal and lasting legacy of racial, environmental, and climate injustice in this country. For example, huge wealth disparities between Black and white households persist,²⁵ as do state voter suppression laws that cost Americans of color their voices at the polls.²⁶ Moreover, communities of color are more likely than white neighborhoods to live with unsafe air quality and drinking water and near toxic waste sites.²⁷ Yet the bold steps this administration is taking lay a strong foundation for future policies that will be needed to continue to tackle racial and environmental injustice and climate change and secure safe and healthy communities for all. This foundation includes the real benefits delivered by the Biden administration's historic investments in climate protections, environmental justice, clean renewable energy, clean air and water, and pollution cleanup in Black, brown, Indigenous, and other communities of color. These investments and their benefits are described below.

Toward the “Beloved Community”

Dr. Martin Luther King believed deeply that all life is interrelated. He described our destinies as “tied in a single garment ... Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly.”²⁸ Dr. King also believed that “Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.”²⁹ He held out a vision of what he called the “Beloved Community,” where peace, justice, love, and understanding prevailed and where poverty, racism, and discrimination of any kind were not tolerated. For Dr. King, the Beloved Community was not an unachievable utopia, but rather an attainable goal that could be reached through unshakable commitment.³⁰

While Dr. King's Beloved Community has not yet been realized, the Biden administration has made important progress that offers hope that perhaps someday it can be. To do so requires faith in this possibility. Policymakers and the American people must not be complacent with where things stand or despondent about what must still be accomplished. Through tireless determination, our country can build on the foundation laid by the Biden administration to ensure that all people—regardless of race, income, or ZIP code—have access to clean air and safe water and the ability to live in a healthy “Beloved Community.”

1. Ensuring clean air, clean water, and a healthy climate

Power plants, industrial facilities, and Superfund sites—or areas contaminated by harmful industrial waste—are disproportionately sited in communities of color and low-income areas,³¹ leading to higher rates of cancer, asthma, and other life-threatening health problems among these communities.³² In fact, communities of color are 3.7 times more likely than white communities to live with high levels of air pollution,³³ and they are disproportionately exposed to harmful levels of polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) pollution, or “forever chemicals,” in drinking water from industrial sources.³⁴ In addition, Black Americans are 75 percent more likely than white Americans to live near polluting industrial facilities.³⁵

\$55 billion for safe drinking water and essential water infrastructure

To make long-overdue progress on addressing these injustices, the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act made an unprecedented \$55 billion investment in upgrading our nation’s water infrastructure to deliver safe drinking water to all communities.³⁶ This included \$23.4 billion to modernize community water infrastructure through the Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF),³⁷ \$15 billion to replace lead service lines,³⁸ and \$10 billion to treat water polluted by dangerous forever chemicals and other contaminants disproportionately found in communities of color.³⁹ The IIJA also invested \$3.5 billion in critical water infrastructure in Tribal communities and additional funds to upgrade water infrastructure in rural areas.⁴⁰ These investments improve public health, create good-paying union jobs, and protect the right of all people to drink safe water and have access to clean water resources.

To date, the EPA has invested more than \$11.7 billion from the IIJA to ensure that communities have access to safe drinking water and clean rivers, lakes, and other water resources.⁴¹ For example, in November 2023, the EPA awarded more than \$77 million to upgrade clean water and drinking water infrastructure in Delaware.⁴² As stated by Rep. Lisa Blunt Rochester (D-DL):

*One of the most fundamental responsibilities of government is to ensure access to clean water ... I’m proud to join the Biden Administration and Senators Carper and Coons in announcing this transformational funding for Delaware, made possible through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, that will strengthen the First State’s ability to deliver on our shared commitment to providing safe and clean water to our communities.*⁴³

“One of the most fundamental responsibilities of government is to ensure access to clean water.”

Rep. Lisa Blunt Rochester (D-DL)

In 2024, the EPA will invest an additional \$2.3 billion in IIJA funding for clean water and safe drinking water infrastructure in all 55 states and U.S. territories.⁴⁴

\$25 billion to clean up industrial pollution

The IIJA also made the largest investment in U.S. history to clean up decades-old industrial legacy pollution—such as lead, mercury, and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs)—that lingers in the environment and can lead to lifelong health problems.⁴⁵ According to the EPA, “More than 1 in 4 Black and Hispanic Americans [live] within 3 miles of a Superfund site.”⁴⁶ For this reason, the IIJA invested \$3.5 billion to clean up the most toxic of these sites and reinstated the Chemicals Superfund Tax and the Hazardous Substances Tax—two environmental excise taxes that were eliminated more than 25 years ago.⁴⁷ For its part, the IRA reinstated the Petroleum Superfund Tax, at a rate of 16.4 cents per barrel. Together, these three taxes are expected to raise \$20 billion in revenue over 10 years to fund the cleanup of hazardous waste sites and protect the health and safety of neighboring communities.⁴⁸

Since December 2021, the EPA has invested \$3.5 billion from the IIJA to clean up more than 150 high-priority Superfund sites across the country and to address the long backlog of hazardous waste sites in communities that have been waiting years for cleanup.⁴⁹ According to the EPA, nearly 80 percent of these sites are “in communities with potential environmental justice concerns,”⁵⁰ with new cleanup projects in 33 states and territories, including Arizona, Georgia, Louisiana, Michigan, Nevada, New Mexico, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, and more.⁵¹

In addition, the IIJA invested more than \$1.5 billion in the EPA’s successful Brownfields Program to clean up former industrial sites, build public infrastructure on these sites, and support job training and community revitalization.⁵²

\$3 billion for community-driven projects to reduce pollution

Meanwhile, the Inflation Reduction Act created the Environmental and Climate Justice (ECJ) program, which invested \$3 billion in communities overburdened by pollution and climate risks to improve public health and protect against more extreme weather fueled by climate change.⁵³ Through this program, the EPA provided \$2 billion for Community Change Grants—the largest single investment in environmental justice in history—to support community-driven projects that reduce pollution and build community capacity to tackle long-standing public health problems tied to racial injustice and disinvestment in communities of color.⁵⁴

\$27 billion for clean renewable energy and climate resilience projects

The IRA's \$27 billion Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund invests in clean renewable energy and climate resilience projects that reduce planet-warming pollution and improve local air quality, with roughly \$19 billion for investments in disadvantaged communities.⁵⁵ The fund focuses on improving public health, economic opportunities, and access to clean affordable energy in communities overburdened by pollution and economic and racial inequality.

Nearly \$300 million for air quality monitoring and enforcement in low-income communities and communities of color

The IRA also provided \$235 million to monitor air quality—including dangerous pollutants such as ozone and particulate matter in communities—at industry fence lines and in or near schools in low-income communities and communities of color.⁵⁶ IRA investments in new enforcement technologies, together with the EPA's enforcement staff expansion, have accelerated actions to hold industrial polluters accountable for meeting critical environmental and public health standards in communities of color.⁵⁷

Together, these historic investments in critical water infrastructure, industrial pollution cleanup, community-driven projects to reduce pollution and build climate resilience, clean and renewable energy, and air quality monitoring are accelerating progress toward securing clean air and water and a healthy climate for all.

2. Lowering household energy costs and providing access to clean renewable energy

According to Diana Hernández, associate professor of sociomedical sciences at Columbia University's Mailman School of Public Health, “More than thirty million US households are energy insecure, meaning that they are unable to adequately meet household energy needs.”⁵⁸ Low-income, Black, brown, and Indigenous communities experience the highest rates of energy insecurity due to racial and economic inequality and poor-quality housing—outcomes of generations of racist housing policies, labor market discrimination, systemic bias within the financial system, and more.⁵⁹ These conditions, together with more frequent and intense extreme-heat events fueled by climate change, are forcing families to make heart-wrenching choices between paying energy bills or buying food, clothes, and medicine.

\$14.3 billion to reduce household energy bills and climate change risks

To cut household energy costs, the Inflation Reduction Act invested nearly \$9 billion in home energy rebates for consumers to upgrade to electric home appliances and make other home energy efficiency improvements, with a focus on low-income families.⁶⁰ For example, the \$4.5 billion Home Electrification and Appliance Rebates program offers households up to \$14,000 in rebates to switch to more efficient electric appliances and save on monthly energy bills, covering 50 to 100 percent of the cost for low- to moderate-income households.⁶¹ The U.S. Department of Energy estimates that these programs will save households up to \$1 billion annually.⁶²

In addition, the IRA invested \$1 billion in the Green and Resilient Retrofit Program to make affordable housing more energy and water efficient and better able to withstand more extreme heat events, flooding, and other climate change effects.⁶³ As of March 2023, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development had awarded more than \$368 million in Green and Resilient Retrofit Program funding to improve the energy efficiency and climate change readiness of 84 multifamily properties, upgrading more than 9,000 homes for low-income families across the country, including in Philadelphia; Augusta, Georgia; and Waukesha, Wisconsin, among many other places.⁶⁴

In 2022 and 2023, the U.S. Department of Energy awarded \$58.7 million in IIJA funds to 21 cities and 14 state agencies to support innovative weatherization assistance projects and save low-income families an average of \$372 or more per year on their energy bills.

The Biden administration is also mobilizing IIJA funds to cut energy costs for low-income households, including \$3.5 billion for the Weatherization Assistance Program to improve home energy efficiency and save low-income families an average of \$372 or more per year on their energy bills.⁶⁵ In 2022 and 2023, the U.S. Department of Energy awarded \$58.7 million in IIJA funds to 21 cities and 14 state agencies to support innovative weatherization assistance projects, including by installing solar panels and making substantial home repairs and efficiency improvements to cut energy costs for low-income families.⁶⁶ For example, the Athens Land Trust in Georgia received funding to improve home weatherization, install solar home systems, and make energy more affordable in three Athens neighborhoods where energy costs absorb a significant portion

of household incomes.⁶⁷ Meanwhile, Milwaukee’s Community Relations-Social Development Commission was awarded funds to support home electrification, improve extreme weather-readiness, and lower energy costs for low-income households, and provide skills training to expand the home repair workforce.⁶⁸ (see figures 1 and 2 below for additional investments to reduce household energy costs and extreme weather risks)

Bonus credit to draw renewable energy development to low-income and Indigenous communities

Moreover, the IRA created the Low-Income Communities Bonus Credit Program to incentivize renewable energy project development in low-income and Indigenous communities to reduce electricity bills for residents.⁶⁹ This program provides an additional 10 to 20 percent bonus for solar and wind energy projects in low-income and Indigenous communities—on top of the IRA’s clean energy investment tax credit, which already covers up to 30 percent of project development costs.⁷⁰

Through these unprecedented investments to upgrade the energy efficiency and climate change readiness of low-income households and increase access to clean renewable energy, the Biden administration is reducing monthly energy costs and extreme weather risks for families.

3. Improving community climate resilience, transportation, and access to living wage jobs

Low-income, Black, brown, and Indigenous communities are hit hardest by extreme weather and climate disasters.⁷¹ Housing discrimination, disinvestment, and the racial wealth gap have left a harmful legacy of crumbling infrastructure and an inadequate supply of quality affordable housing.⁷² These inequities increase residents’ vulnerability to climate change⁷³ and severely limit their ability to prepare for and recover from extreme weather events, with devastating health consequences.⁷⁴ For example, extreme heat is responsible for more deaths every year than any other type of extreme weather,⁷⁵ with the highest risks in Black, brown, and Indigenous communities,⁷⁶ where many struggle to pay energy bills, do not have access to air conditioning, and have chronic illnesses tied to racial and economic inequality—such as heart disease, high blood pressure, and diabetes.⁷⁷ The harmful practice of redlining also left many communities of color with concentrated poverty,⁷⁸ more pavement, and fewer trees and parks, which help to cool temperatures.⁷⁹

In addition, many ports and highways were intentionally built in, near, or directly through Black communities,⁸⁰ reinforcing segregation and decimating neighborhoods by cutting them off from economic opportunities and bringing safety risks and air and noise pollution from gas-powered cars and diesel-fueled trucks.⁸¹

\$14.7 billion to reconnect communities and support sustainable and affordable transportation

The Inflation Reduction Act and IIJA both aim to make historic progress in addressing these racist policies. For example, the IRA invested \$3.2 billion in the Neighborhood Access and Equity (NAE) grant program to remove existing transportation infrastructure that cuts off communities from economic opportunities.⁸² This investment included \$1.3 billion for economically disadvantaged communities to improve community health, connectivity, and quality of life. The program is bolstered by the IIJA's \$1 billion for the Reconnecting Communities Pilot grant program,⁸³ which shares the same goals as NAE.⁸⁴ In February 2023, the U.S. Department of Transportation announced its first wave of awards from this historic program,⁸⁵ totaling \$185 million for 45 communities across the country—from Tucson, Atlanta, and Charlotte to Las Vegas and Pittsburgh—to reconnect neighborhoods divided by transportation infrastructure.⁸⁶ In March 2024, President Biden awarded an additional \$3.3 billion to reconnect communities divided by decades-old highways and rail lines in more than 40 states. These investments aim to revitalize communities and increase access to jobs, quality housing, schools, health care, parks, and other essential services.⁸⁷

Meanwhile, the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) program received a \$7.5 billion boost from the IIJA to improve community connectivity, safety, and economic security by investing in sustainable and equitable transportation projects, including public transit, railways, and roads.⁸⁸ In addition, the IIJA invested \$3 billion in the Tribal Transportation Program to improve transportation safety and mobility in Tribal communities.⁸⁹

Roughly \$3 billion for healthy ports and diesel pollution reduction

The IRA also invested \$3 billion to reduce air pollution at ports.⁹⁰ In February 2024, the EPA launched the Clean Ports Program and announced the \$3 billion funding opportunity to help port authorities and truck hubs purchase zero-emission equipment and develop climate action plans to reduce air pollution from diesel-powered equipment, vehicles, and marine vessels. In

a statement, White House Council on Environmental Quality Chair Brenda Mallory affirmed: “Communities near our nation’s ports are disproportionately impacted by air pollution and other environmental hazards, and this funding will help reduce emissions while creating good-paying jobs as we transition to a clean energy future.”⁹¹ In addition, the IRA provided \$60 million for the EPA’s Diesel Emissions Reduction Act program to improve public health in communities disproportionately exposed to diesel pollution from goods movement facilities and vehicles servicing those facilities.⁹²

\$2.5 billion to reduce extreme heat and climate disaster risks

The IRA and IIJA also made groundbreaking investments in protecting communities from climate change threats. The IRA included \$1.5 billion for the Urban and Community Forestry Assistance Program to expand tree cover and green spaces in cities, where roughly 85 percent of Americans live and work, in an effort to cool neighborhoods, reduce extreme heat risks, and create jobs in tree-planting and maintenance.⁹³ In September 2023, the U.S. Department of Agriculture awarded \$1 billion for roughly 400 projects in all 50 states to increase community access to trees and parks.⁹⁴

These investments are improving climate resilience, public health, and access to economic opportunities in communities affected by racial and environmental injustice and economic inequality.

The IIJA, likewise, provided \$1 billion for the Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) program to reduce extreme weather and climate disaster risks, including extreme heat, flooding, hurricanes, wildfires, and drought.⁹⁵ The program prioritizes climate resilient infrastructure and hazard mitigation in disadvantaged and Tribal communities, including disaster-ready building codes. In May 2023, the Federal Emergency Management Agency awarded \$136 million for 325 projects in 55 states and territories and 34 tribes.⁹⁶ In addition, 46 Tribal nations and communities will receive direct technical assistance to support the development of community resilience projects.⁹⁷

These investments to reconnect communities, expand access to sustainable transportation, cut pollution at ports, and reduce extreme weather and climate disaster risks are improving climate resilience, public health, and access to economic opportunities in communities affected by racial and environmental injustice and economic inequality.

Conclusion

The more than \$148 billion that the Biden administration has invested in low-income, Black, brown, and Indigenous communities, mobilized by the Inflation Reduction Act and Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, along with the Justice40 Initiative and other groundbreaking environmental justice policies, provides clear evidence that President Biden has prioritized securing clean air and water, healthy communities, and a more just and prosperous future for all. The work is far from complete; yet the Biden administration's historic actions to tackle environmental injustice and climate change offer hope that with tireless determination, we can and must bring to life Dr. King's vision of the Beloved Community for all people.

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TABLE 1

The Inflation Reduction Act invests \$55 billion for clean air and water, climate protection, access to clean affordable energy, and healthy communities for all

Program/administrator*	Description	Funding and type	Who is eligible to apply
Ensuring clean air, safe water, and a healthy climate			
Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund: National Clean Investment Fund (EPA)	Mobilizes financing for clean energy and climate projects that reduce local pollution and greenhouse gas emissions and support climate resilience	\$14 billion in competitive grants, loans, and other forms of financial assistance	"National nonprofit clean financing institutions" that will then deliver funds to clean energy projects
Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund: Clean Communities Investment Accelerator (EPA)	Delivers funding and technical assistance to community lenders in low-income and disadvantaged communities	\$6 billion in competitive grants to eligible entities, which will then distribute funding and technical assistance to community lenders	Hub nonprofits that will then deliver funding and technical assistance to build the clean financing capacity of local community lenders working in low-income and disadvantaged communities
Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund: Solar for All program (EPA)	Expands residential solar investments in low-income and disadvantaged communities	\$7 billion in competitive grants to eligible entities, which will then use grant funds to create residential solar programs	States, territories, Tribal governments, municipalities, and eligible nonprofit recipients
Clean Ports Program (EPA)	Funds zero-emissions port equipment and infrastructure as well as climate and air quality planning at U.S. ports	\$3 billion in rebates and competitive grants, with \$750 million for ports in areas where air quality does not meet national standards	Port authorities; state, regional, local, or Tribal agencies that have jurisdiction over a port authority or a port; air pollution control agencies; certain private or nonprofit entities
Environmental and Climate Justice grant program (EPA)	Funds community-driven projects to reduce pollution and climate threats tied to racial injustice and environmental hazards in overburdened communities	\$3 billion in competitive grants, including \$200 million for technical assistance	Community-based nonprofit organizations (CBOs); partnership of CBOs; partnership between a CBO and a Tribe, local government, or higher education institution
Clean Heavy-Duty Vehicles Program (EPA)	Supports replacing heavy-duty vehicles with clean, zero-emissions vehicles; zero-emissions vehicle infrastructure; and training and workforce development	\$1 billion in competitive grants and rebates, including \$400 million for communities where air quality does not meet national standards	States, municipalities, Native American Tribes, nonprofit school transportation associations
Diesel Emissions Reduction Act Program (EPA)	Helps identify and reduce the health impacts of diesel emissions from goods movement facilities and vehicles in overburdened communities	\$60 million in grants, rebates, and loans	A regional, state, local, or Tribal agency or port authority with jurisdiction over transportation or air quality; certain nonprofit organizations and institutions
Funding to address air pollution and air pollution monitoring (EPA)	Funds air quality sensors in low-income and disadvantaged communities, multipollutant monitoring stations, fence-line air monitoring, emissions from wood heaters, methane monitoring, and mobile source monitoring	\$235.5 million in grants	State, local, or Tribal air agencies; nonprofit institutions or organizations
Funding to address air pollution at schools (EPA)	Funds efforts to monitor and reduce air and climate-warming pollution at schools in low-income and disadvantaged communities	\$50 million in competitive grants and technical assistance	State, local, or Tribal agencies; nonprofit organizations; others to support schools in low-income and disadvantaged communities

TABLE 1

The Inflation Reduction Act invests \$55 billion for clean air and water, climate protection, access to clean affordable energy, and healthy communities for all

Program/administrator*	Description	Funding and type	Who is eligible to apply
Reinstatement of the Superfund tax on oil and gas production (EPA)	Reinstates the Superfund tax to reduce pollution in low-income and disadvantaged communities	Estimated \$11.7 billion to be used for Superfund site cleanup. According to the EPA, roughly 80 percent of Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act funds for Superfund cleanup have been used for site cleanup in communities "with potential environmental justice concerns."	Industry partners; federal, state, local, and Tribal governments; special districts are eligible to apply to use the funds for Superfund site cleanup once secured through the reinstated tax.
Tribal Energy Loan Guarantee Program (DOE)	Supports Tribal investments in energy-related projects by providing direct or partial loan guarantees	\$20 billion in loan guarantees and \$75 million to carry out the program	Native American Tribes or entities
Climate Change Technical Assistance for Territories program (Interior Department)	Provides technical assistance to the U.S. insular areas for climate change mitigation, adaptation, and resilience planning	\$15.9 million in grants, interagency agreements, and direct federal spending	Territory governments
Low Emissions Electricity Program (EPA)	Funds activities that support clean electricity generation, including education, technical assistance, and partnerships with low-income and disadvantaged communities	\$17 million in direct federal spending	Direct federal spending
Funding for enforcement technology and public information (EPA)	Upgrades the EPA's Integrated Compliance Information System and improves enforcement of environmental laws	\$25 million in direct federal spending and competitive grants	States and state pollution control agencies
Oversight by the Government Accountability Office (GAO) and Office of Management and Budget (OMB)	Supports oversight of Inflation Reduction Act funds; tracks labor, equity, and environmental standards and performance; and assesses the equity of the act's funding impacts and benefits	\$50 million in direct federal spending	Direct federal spending
Environmental reviews by federal agencies (USDA, NOAA, DOE, FERC, Interior Department, EPA, CEQ, DOT)	Supports robust, timely, and efficient environmental reviews across the federal government, including to implement the National Environmental Policy Act	\$655 million in direct federal spending	Direct federal spending
Environmental and Climate Data Improvement (CEQ)	Improves the quality, availability, and use of data to support the federal government's efforts to address environmental injustice and to better protect all communities from environmental and climate impacts	\$32.5 million in direct federal spending	Direct federal spending
Permanent extension of coal excise tax to fund Black Lung Disability Trust Fund (DOL)	Permanently extends funds and other benefits to miners with black lung disease and their families and eliminates funding uncertainty and stress tied to short-term extensions	"Benefit payments and administrative expenses are expected to total \$1.1 billion from FY2021 to FY2025."	Current and former coal miners affected by black lung disease and their surviving dependents

TABLE 1

The Inflation Reduction Act invests \$55 billion for clean air and water, climate protection, access to clean affordable energy, and healthy communities for all

Program/administrator*	Description	Funding and type	Who is eligible to apply
Lowering household energy costs and providing access to clean, renewable energy			
Home Efficiency Rebates program (DOE)	Supports energy savings programs to distribute rebates to homeowners to improve home and multifamily building energy efficiency and lower electricity bills. Covers more than half of project costs and more than 80 percent of the cost for low- or moderate-income households	\$4.3 billion in grants	Grants to state energy offices, which will distribute rebates to homeowners and aggregators
Home Electrification and Appliance Rebates program (DOE)	Supports high-efficiency electric home rebate programs, with a focus on helping low-income consumers switch to efficient electric appliances and cut energy costs, covering 50 percent to 100 percent of the cost for low- to moderate-income households	\$4.5 billion in grants	Grants to state energy offices and Tribal entities, which will distribute rebates to homeowners
Green and Resilient Retrofit Program (HUD)	Funds projects that improve energy or water efficiency, enhance indoor air quality, install clean electricity or building materials, or strengthen climate resilience of multifamily properties that receive assistance from HUD	\$1 billion in competitive grants and direct loans	HUD-assisted multifamily properties
Tribal Electrification Program (Interior Department)	Expands Tribal community access to electricity, and transitions Tribal homes with electricity to clean renewable energy systems	\$150 million for financial and technical assistance	Tribes
Low-Income Communities Bonus Credit Program (DOE)	10 percent bonus credit for projects built in low-income communities or on Native American land, or 20 percent bonus credit for low-income residential building projects or economic benefit projects	Tax credit, with allocations capped at 1.8 gigawatts of energy capacity annually	Clean-energy project owners
Energy Community Tax Credit Bonus program (IRS)	10 percent bonus credit for projects built in communities historically reliant on the fossil fuel industry for jobs and tax revenues	Tax credit, with total funding amount based on credit demand	Clean-energy project owners
Improving community climate resilience, transportation, and access to living-wage jobs			
Neighborhood Access and Equity Grant Program (DOT)	"Provides grants to reconnect communities; remediate negative impacts of transportation infrastructure; and improve walkability, safety, and affordable transportation access"	\$3.205 billion in competitive grants	States and territories, local governments and political subdivisions, Tribal governments, public transit authorities, nonprofits, or higher education institutions that partner with other described entities
Urban and Community Forestry Program (USDA)	Expands tree cover and parks in cities and communities vulnerable to extreme heat to reduce extreme heat risks and create jobs	\$1.5 billion in grants	State agencies, local governmental entities, Tribes, nonprofit organizations
Tribal Climate Resilience Program (Interior Department)	Supports climate resilience planning to help sustain Tribal ecosystems and natural and cultural resources, economies, infrastructure, human health, and safety	\$235 million in direct federal spending and grants	Tribes

TABLE 1

The Inflation Reduction Act invests \$55 billion for clean air and water, climate protection, access to clean affordable energy, and healthy communities for all

Program/administrator*	Description	Funding and type	Who is eligible to apply
Kapapahuliau Climate Resilience Program (USBR)	Helps Native Hawaiian communities build resilience to climate change effects	\$25 million in direct federal spending and grants or cooperative agreements	State or local governments, Native Hawaiian community representatives, universities, and nongovernmental organizations
Emergency drought relief for Tribes (USBR)	Funds near-term drought relief, builds drought resilience, and mitigates drought impacts in Tribal communities	\$12.5 million in grants or cooperative agreements	Tribes
Domestic water supply projects (USBR)	Improves water supplies for disadvantaged communities and households without reliable access to water	\$550 million in grants, contracts, or financial assistance agreements	Disadvantaged communities in states covered by the Bureau of Reclamation
Assistance for distressed borrowers (USDA)	Provides assistance payments to distressed borrowers of loans from the USDA's Farm Service Agency	\$3.1 billion in direct federal spending	Direct federal spending
Assistance and support for underserved farmers, ranchers, and foresters (USDA)	Provides financial assistance to producers that have experienced discrimination in the USDA's farm lending programs	\$2.2 billion in financial assistance, cooperative agreements, grants, and direct federal spending	Farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners who experienced discrimination in the USDA's farm loan programs
Used electric vehicle tax credit (IRS)	Provides a \$4,000 tax credit for low- and moderate-income individuals purchasing used electric vehicles	Tax credit, with total funding amount based on credit demand	Individuals purchasing a used electric vehicle, limited for those with income below \$75,000; \$150,000 if married filing jointly; or \$112,500 for heads of household

* The full names of program administrators are: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), U.S. Department of the Interior, Government Accountability Office (GAO), Office of Management and Budget (OMB), U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT), U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Bureau of Indian Affairs, U.S. Forest Service, Office of Native Hawaiian Relations, Bureau of Reclamation (USBR), and Internal Revenue Service (IRS).

Note: Most of these funding opportunities are available for several years, disbursed in annual funding tranches. Methodology: The programs funded by the Inflation Reduction Act that are listed in this table are designed to deliver federal funding and/or benefits to disadvantaged communities, communities of color, low-income communities, and communities overburdened by pollution—also known as environmental justice communities. Many programs listed aim to reduce environmental harms that disproportionately affect communities of color and low-income areas and were supported by the Equitable and Just National Climate Platform co-authors as programs that advance environmental justice priorities and are in need of additional federal funding. Almost all of the programs listed are also officially covered by the Biden administration's Justice40 Initiative and are required to deliver at least 40 percent of program investment benefits to disadvantaged communities. This is not an exhaustive list of Inflation Reduction Act programs that have the potential to benefit disadvantaged communities. A full list of programs can be found in the "Inflation Reduction Act Guidebook." To calculate the "total" amount of Inflation Reduction Act funding that will benefit disadvantaged communities, the authors adjusted the act's program funding amounts identified as benefiting disadvantaged communities based on program specifications in the Inflation Reduction Act or by the agency administering the program. For example, the authors assumed that 100 percent of investments in programs designed to reduce pollution or other environmental hazards that disproportionately harm communities of color and low-income areas would go to disadvantaged communities. For investments in programs that benefit all communities, the authors assumed that 40 percent of the investment would benefit disadvantaged communities, consistent with the Biden administration's Justice40 commitment, unless otherwise specified by the Inflation Reduction Act or by the administering agency. Tax credits designed to benefit disadvantaged communities were not included in the total funding amount because it is difficult to estimate the total amount of tax credits that will be delivered to residents in disadvantaged communities.

Source: The White House, "Inflation Reduction Act Guidebook," available at <https://www.whitehouse.gov/cleanenergy/inflation-reduction-act-guidebook/> (last accessed March 2024).

TABLE 2

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) invests \$93 billion for clean air and water, climate protection, access to clean affordable energy, and healthy communities for all

Program/administrator*	Description	Funding and type	Who is eligible to apply
Ensuring clean air, safe water, and a healthy climate			
Drinking Water State Revolving Fund Lead Service Lines Replacement program (EPA)	Supports lead service line removal and replacement and related activities, such as identifying lead service lines and planning and designing replacement projects	\$15 billion in loans and grants	States, Tribes, and territories distribute the funds to water utilities, municipalities, or other eligible entities
Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (EPA)	Funds improvements to drinking water systems to protect public health and support compliance with the Safe Drinking Water Act	\$11.71 billion in loans and grants	States, Tribes, and territories distribute the funds to water utilities, municipalities, or other eligible entities
Clean Water State Revolving Fund (EPA)	Provides communities with low-cost financing for water quality infrastructure improvements	\$11.71 billion in loans and grants	States, Tribes, and territories distribute the funds to water utilities, municipalities, or other eligible entities
Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation Act: Small and Underserved Communities Emerging Contaminants Grant Program (EPA)	Funds improvements to public water systems in small, underserved and disadvantaged communities that need assistance to comply with drinking water regulations. Prioritizes activities to help communities reduce the health risks of emerging contaminants, such as PFAS – or forever chemicals – water testing and filtration	\$5 billion in grants	States, Tribes, and territories provide grants and loans to water utilities, municipalities, and other eligible entities in small and/or underserved or disadvantaged communities
Drinking Water State Revolving Fund Emerging Contaminants (EPA)	Funds projects that reduce the health risks of emerging contaminants, such as PFAS, or forever chemicals	\$4 billion in grants	States, Tribes, and territories provide grants and loans to water utilities, municipalities, and other eligible entities for projects to address PFAS and other emerging contaminants
Clean Water State Revolving Fund Emerging Contaminants (EPA)	Funds projects that reduce the health risks of emerging contaminants, such as PFAS, or forever chemicals	\$1 billion in loans and grants	States, Tribes, and territories distribute the funds to water utilities, municipalities, or other eligible entities
Indian water rights settlements (Interior Department)	Provides funding to satisfy water rights settlements to ensure Tribes acquire permanent access to clean, reliable water supplies	\$2.5 billion in contracts, compacts, or trust funds	Recognized Tribal governments
Rural water projects (Interior Department)	Funds seven rural water projects authorized by an act of Congress, consistent with the Reclamation Rural Water Supply Act of 2006	\$1 billion in project funding	Tribal and local governments
Safety of dams, water sanitation, and other facilities (Interior Department)	Supports the Bureau of Indian Affairs Safety of Dams Branch in maintaining dam safety to protect communities and property from damage	\$200 million in contracts or compacts	Recognized Tribal governments
Indian Health Service Sanitation Facilities Construction Program (HHS)	Supports American Tribes and Alaska Native villages with developing and building safe drinking water, sewage, and solid waste disposal facilities	\$3.5 billion in Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act agreements and direct federal spending	Federally recognized Tribal governments

TABLE 2

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) invests \$93 billion for clean air and water, climate protection, access to clean affordable energy, and healthy communities for all

Program/administrator*	Description	Funding and type	Who is eligible to apply
Tribal irrigation and power systems (Interior Department)	Addresses deferred maintenance at irrigation projects located on Native American reservations in the Rocky Mountain, Northwest, Southwest, Navajo, and Western regions	\$50 million in contracts or compacts	Recognized Tribal governments
Abandoned Mine Reclamation Fund (Interior Department)	"Funds cleanup of abandoned coal mine sites and related challenges that threaten public health and safety, restoration of land and water resources degraded by the effects of past coal mining, and emergency projects"	\$11.3 billion in grants	States and Tribes
Orphaned Wells Program (Interior Department)	"Closes orphaned wells and remediates environmental hazards, including cleaning up water contamination, restoring native habitats, and reducing emissions"	\$4.7 billion in direct federal spending, grants, and technical assistance	States, Tribes, and the Interstate Oil and Gas Compact Commission
Superfund site cleanup (EPA)	Funds the cleanup of areas contaminated by harmful industrial waste to protect public health and the environment	\$3.5 billion in contracts, cooperative agreements, and interagency agreements. According to the EPA, "nearly 80% of the [Superfund] funding from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law has gone to sites in communities with potential environmental justice concerns."	Industry partners; federal, state, local, and Tribal governments; special districts
Reinstatement of the chemicals and hazardous substances excise taxes (EPA)	Reauthorizes the Superfund chemicals excise tax through December 31, 2031, at double the rates that were in effect in 1995	\$8.3 billion in tax revenue between 2021 and 2032, as estimated by the Joint Committee on Taxation. Based on current Superfund program funding allocations, roughly 80 percent of these funds are expected to go to "communities with potential environmental justice concerns."	Industry partners; federal, state, local, and Tribal governments; special districts
Brownfield remediation and revitalization (EPA)	Provides financial and technical support to clean up and reuse former industrial sites in disadvantaged communities overburdened by pollution, build public infrastructure on these sites, engage communities, and offer job training to transform brownfields into community assets	\$1.5 billion in cooperative agreements	States, counties, cities, or townships; federally recognized Tribal governments; public housing authorities; Indian housing authorities; nonprofit groups

TABLE 2

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) invests \$93 billion for clean air and water, climate protection, access to clean affordable energy, and healthy communities for all

Program/administrator*	Description	Funding and type	Who is eligible to apply
Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement program (DOT)	Funds transportation projects that reduce congestion and improve air quality in areas where ozone, carbon monoxide, and particulate matter pollution exceed national air quality standards	\$13.2 billion in formula grants	States
Pollution Prevention grants program (EPA)	Provides technical assistance to businesses to reduce or eliminate pollution	\$100 million in grants	States, Tribes, state/Tribal institutions to deliver technical assistance to businesses
Reduction of Truck Emissions at Port Facilities program (DOT)	Reduces truck idling and emissions at ports, including through the advancement of port electrification	\$400 million in competitive grants	State and local governments, transportation providers, planning and project organizations
Lowering household energy costs and providing access to clean, renewable energy			
Weatherization Assistance Program (DOE)	Increases the energy efficiency of low-income households to lower home energy bills and improve health and safety, with a focus on low-income households with children, older adults, or people with disabilities	\$3.5 billion in formula grants	States and Tribes
Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant Program (DOE)	Supports activities to reduce energy use and fossil fuel emissions and to improve energy efficiency	\$550 million in block and competitive grants	State, local, and Tribal governments
Energy Efficiency Revolving Loan Fund Capitalization Grant Program (DOE)	Funds the creation of state revolving loan funds to "provide loans and grants for energy efficiency audits, upgrades, and retrofits to increase energy efficiency."	\$250 million in formula grants	States
Resilient and Efficient Codes Implementation program (DOE)	Supports "sustained, cost-effective implementation of updated building energy codes" to reduce household energy bills	\$225 million in grants	States and state partnerships
Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (HHS)	Assists low-income households with energy costs, bill payment assistance, weatherization, and other energy repairs	\$500 million in grants	States, territories, Tribal governments, Indian housing authorities
Improving community climate resilience, transportation, and access to living-wage jobs			
Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) (FEMA)	Supports hazard mitigation projects and capacity building to reduce risks from disasters and natural hazards, including extreme heat, flooding, hurricanes, and more	\$1 billion in competitive grants. According to FEMA, 61 percent of the BRIC funds from FEMA are benefiting disadvantaged communities.	State, local, Tribal, and territorial governments
Flood Mitigation Assistance Grant Program (FEMA)	Funds activities to reduce risk of repetitive flood damage to homes and businesses	\$3.5 billion in grants	State, local, Tribal, and territorial governments, and local communities

TABLE 2

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) invests \$93 billion for clean air and water, climate protection, access to clean affordable energy, and healthy communities for all

Program/administrator*	Description	Funding and type	Who is eligible to apply
"Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient, and Cost-Saving Transportation (PROTECT) Program (DOT)"	Supports activities to strengthen community and transportation infrastructure resilience, including improving evacuation routes and at-risk coastal infrastructure	\$8.7 billion in grants; \$1.4 billion in discretionary funds for competitive grants, \$7.3 billion for formula grants	States, Tribes, local governments, political subdivisions within states, metropolitan planning organizations, "special purpose district or public authority with a transportation function," federal land management agency applying with states, and other eligible entities
Safeguarding Tomorrow Revolving Loan Fund Program (FEMA)	Supports capitalization grants to establish revolving loan funds that provide hazard mitigation assistance to reduce risks from natural hazards and disasters	\$500 million in grants	States and Tribal governments that have "received a major disaster declaration during the 5-year period ending on the date of enactment of the STORM Act."
Reconnecting Communities Pilot grant program (DOT)	Funds the removal of existing transportation infrastructure that cuts off communities from economic opportunities to improve community health, connectivity, and quality of life	\$1 billion in competitive grants	Owners of eligible transportation facilities, such as highways or railroads, that create a barrier to community connectivity
Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) program (DOT)	Funds projects that improve community connectivity, safety, mobility, and economic security with sustainable and equitable transportation, including public transit, railways, and roads	\$7.5 billion in competitive grants	States, territories, local, and Tribal governments; public agencies; port authorities; Amtrak partnerships; other eligible entities
Tribal Transportation Program (DOT)	Funds transportation safety and mobility improvements in Tribal communities.	\$3 billion in formula grants	Federally recognized Tribal governments
Tribal Transportation Facility Bridge Program (DOT)	Funds replacement or repair of bridges in poor condition	\$825 million distributed through the Tribal Transportation Program	Tribes
Grid Innovation Program (DOE)	Funds hardening grid infrastructure and enhancing grid resilience and reliability and demonstrating new approaches to enhance regional grid resilience	\$5 billion in grants or cooperative agreements	States, Tribes, local governments, public utility commissions
Preventing Outages and Enhancing the Resilience of the Electric Grid Grants (DOE)	Supports preventing outages and enhancing the resilience of the electric grid, particularly against wildfires and other disruptive extreme weather events	\$5 billion in grants or cooperative agreements	States, Tribes, grid operators
National Oceans and Coastal Resilience Fund (NOAA)	Strengthens natural infrastructure to protect coastal communities while enhancing natural habitats, providing increased support for climate-vulnerable communities	\$492 million in grants	Nonprofit organizations; state, Tribal, local, and territorial governments; educational institutions or for-profit commercial organizations
Tribal Climate Resilience Annual Awards Program (Interior Department)	Supports Tribal climate resilience awards for adaptation planning and community relocation for communities affected by climate threats	\$216 million in contracts or compacts	Tribal governments

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The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) invests \$93 billion for clean air and water, climate protection, access to clean affordable energy, and healthy communities for all

Program/administrator*	Description	Funding and type	Who is eligible to apply
Community Wildfire Defense Grant Program for at-risk communities (USDA)	Provides grants to communities at risk from wildfires to plan for and reduce the risk of fires	\$1 billion in grants	Communities at risk from wildfires, Tribal communities, state forestry agencies and other nonprofit organizations, private forest owners
Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC)	Supports projects that address economic disparities in the region, including building community infrastructure, providing job training and workforce development, and supporting community leaders and capacity building, among other activities	\$1 billion in grants and cooperative agreements	State and local governments and nonprofit organizations

* The full names of program administrators are: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), U.S. Department of the Interior, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT), U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), and Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC).

Note: Most of these funding opportunities are available for several years, disbursed in annual funding tranches. Methodology: The programs funded by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) listed in this table are designed to deliver federal funds and/or benefits to disadvantaged communities, communities of color, low-income communities, and/or communities overburdened by pollution—also known as environmental justice communities. Many programs listed aim to reduce environmental harms that disproportionately affect communities of color and low-income areas and were supported by the Equitable and Just National Climate Platform co-authors as programs that advance environmental justice priorities and are in need of additional federal funding. The program funding listed is specifically designated for disadvantaged communities and/or covered by the Biden administration's Justice40 Initiative and is required to deliver at least 40 percent of program investment benefits to disadvantaged communities. This is not an exhaustive list of IIJA programs that have the potential to benefit environmental justice communities. A full list of IIJA programs can be found in "A Guidebook to the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law." To calculate the "total" amount of IIJA funding that will benefit disadvantaged communities, the authors adjusted the program funding amounts identified as benefiting disadvantaged communities based on program specifications in the IIJA or by the agency administering the program. For example, the authors assumed that 100 percent of investments in programs designed to reduce pollution or other environmental hazards that disproportionately harm communities of color and low-income areas would go to disadvantaged communities. For investments in programs that benefit all communities, the authors assumed that 40 percent of the investment would benefit disadvantaged communities, consistent with the Biden administration's Justice40 commitment, unless otherwise specified by the IIJA or the administering agency.

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