

Dear Mayor Turner: We Can Be Your Allies on Pollution, Climate Change

Dear Mayor Turner:

Thank you for your op-ed titled, "[Cities Must Get Creative In The Fight Against Air Pollution.](#)" We applaud you for recognizing the public health impacts from the many forms of air pollution in our city.

We agree that giving voices to the people in communities whose voices often are ignored or silenced is an important action that cities, in particular Houston, should take to help reduce and prevent air pollution. Many of us work alongside partners in city departments, and we know that the city's employees care deeply about its residents and making Houston prosper.

To reach our mutual goal of protecting residents from pollution, we ask that your office take critical steps first by better protecting communities from environmental hazards and mitigating exposure by ensuring that city departments are funded to provide avenues to better protect residents through legal action, permitting, and robust environmental justice policy. Second, we ask your office to lead a regional initiative to work with county and state officials to develop a comprehensive plan to address air toxics. Finding ways to protect residents is worthy, and we stand with you in your protests of new concrete batch plant permits.

We are proud of the city's accomplishments in purchasing renewable energy. Yet year after year, Houston is learning what it looks like to be a community on the frontline of climate change. Many of us recognize the need to both continue to reduce emissions and to prepare for whatever the next climate-related disaster could deliver: flooding, drought, heat, fires. Now is the time to act.

As co-chair of the Climate Mayors, you have announced your support for the Paris Agreement. We agree with your remarks that cities are front-and-center in the fight against climate change, and we are proud to live and work in a city like Houston where you, as mayor, speak openly about the need to act on climate.

But to fulfill that commitment, Houston needs a climate action and adaptation plan with ambitious goals and measurable targets. Given our vulnerability, our plan needs to do much more than reduce emissions at the municipal level. Houston's plan needs to address emissions within the community for us to have the reductions in emissions to meet these goals. Our climate action plan needs to include strategies to adapt to a changing climate and protect the most vulnerable among us as we continue to be Houston Strong and increase our resiliency.

After last April's climate march where you spoke, a coalition emerged called the Houston Climate Movement, which seeks to ensure the wellbeing of Houstonians by advocating for local climate action. This coalition and its partners are here to work with you and the city on both air quality and climate change. Please consider us allies in this work to improve the health and well-being of Houstonians and to ensure an equitable, stronger, and more resilient Houston for our future.

Respectfully,

Stephanie Thomas, Ph.D.
Houston Climate Movement

Rev. James Caldwell
Coalition of Community Organizations

Priscilla Villa,
Earthworks

Adrian Shelley, J.D.
Public Citizen

Carol Burrus
First UU Climate Protection Team

Ann May
Emerson UU Earth Care Ministry

Jordan Macha
Bayou City Waterkeepers

Jacqueline Smith
NAACP Houston Branch

Bruce Handley
Houston 350.org

Jasmin Patel
Houston Peace and Justice Center

Bakeyah Nelson
Air Alliance Houston

Rosanne Baronne
Texas Campaign for the
Environment

Sandra Cisneros Peeters
Greenpeace Houston

Elizabeth Spike
Houston Sierra Club Group

Luke Metzger
Environment Texas

Dominic Broyer, Ph.D.
Rice Center for Energy and
Environmental Research in the
Human Sciences

John Coleman
Private Citizen

Gabriel Clark-Leach
Environmental Integrity Project



WWW.NAACP.ORG
NAACP HOUSTON



**TEXAS CAMPAIGN
FOR THE ENVIRONMENT**

