

## Water Equity and Climate Resilience Caucus

### About the Caucus

*The Water Equity and Climate Resilience Caucus convenes the foremost leaders working at the intersection of water equity and climate resilience to build strategy, peer power, and policy change.*

These leaders are taking on water and climate threats, challenging political opposition, and building models and movements to deliver water secure, climate resilient communities. With indigenous leaders building an international “keep it in the ground” movement to end fossil fuel pollution; with state and local leaders setting goals to reduce toxic exposures and design resilient infrastructure; and with a new generation of environmental entrepreneurs and leaders of color, this Caucus holds promise for moving federal, state, local, and tribal policy that centers water equity and climate security for vulnerable low income communities and communities of color.

### Why Water Equity and Climate Resilience Matter

For decades, community leaders and advocates have worked to bring attention to the water problems impacting low income communities and communities of color across the U.S. From agricultural runoff, sea level rise, and water shutoffs, communities are facing insufficient and inequitable water access. While not always framed in climate terms, current versions of water challenges are now *all* seen through a climate resilience lens. The aging out of water infrastructure requires resilient systems redesign to address clean water access and climate change threats.

Nearly 77 million U.S. residents are served by drinking water systems with one or more Safe Drinking Water Act violations. There is mounting evidence that climate-related increases in extreme weather events threaten the aging infrastructure of hundreds of millions of people. While data are not available to disaggregate by race or income, a robust body of research has documented the disproportionate impact on low income communities and communities of color. The responsibility for addressing these water and climate threats has fallen on local leaders who are driving vital campaigns to foster justice from the ground up.

### Our Results

The Caucus works to affect policies that move forward these results:

- **Result 1:** Safe and affordable drinking water for the 100 million economically vulnerable residents.
- **Result 2:** Water infrastructure investments build climate resilience and expand economic opportunities for communities of color.
- **Result 3:** Economically vulnerable communities have agency in water infrastructure policy making processes that shape their lives.



## Caucus Priorities for Action in 2018-2020

The Caucus advances four priorities through working groups on:

- Addressing Climate Related Flooding, Drought, and Sea Level Rise  
*Co-chaired by Colette Pichon Battle, Gulf Coast Center on Law and Policy and Danielle Ngo, PolicyLink*
- Securing Public Health through Equitable Infrastructure Systems that Provide Safe, Affordable Water and Sanitation  
*Co-chaired by Susana de Anda and Jonathan Nelson, Community Water Center and Chione Flegal, PolicyLink*
- Targeting Education, Training, Workforce Development, and Business Opportunities for Communities of Color in Climate Resilient Water Systems  
*Co-chaired by Denise Fairchild, Emerald Cities Collaborative and Axel Santana, PolicyLink*
- Creating a Climate Resilience and Water Equity Framing Paper  
*Co-chaired by Amanda Klasing, Human Rights Watch and Kalima Rose, PolicyLink*

Each working group:

- identifies key policy change priorities within its domain;
- educates the full caucus and allies on this arena of issues and approach;
- educates decision-makers and advances local or state policy campaigns;
- weighs in on federal policy as relevant;
- develops model policy priorities and strategy to pilot in local or state efforts;
- contributes their analysis to a Water Equity and Climate Resilience framing paper; and,
- provides timely and urgent solidarity to other members and working groups in addressing water and climate justice.



## Caucus Membership

The **Steering Committee** consists of 16 members that include 8 national or regional network or coalition leaders in the water equity or climate justice space, and one of their local frontline affiliates. Steering Committee members are responsible for governance and accountability for results, fundraising, and direction setting of the Caucus, and working group leadership.

The **Caucus Membership** consists of equity-focused members who are committed to advancing water equity and climate resilience as a core part of their work. Caucus members are responsible for driving peer learning, working group participation, and leadership in advocacy actions.

The **Caucus Allies** consist of organizations focused on water and/or climate who want to participate in learning and advocacy activities that support equity and resilience. Caucus allies will be invited to quarterly peer learning sessions and asked to join on advocacy actions.

For more information, contact:

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<http://www.policylink.org/our-work/community/infrastructure/water-equity-and-climate-resilience>

## Our Partners

- American Planning Association
- Anthropocene Alliance
- Civic Spark California
- Clean Water Action
- Clean Water for All Campaign
- Climate Justice Alliance\*
- Collective Wisdom Group
- Community Water Center\*
- Coalition of Communities of Color
- Derute Consulting Cooperative
- East Michigan Environmental Action Council\*
- Emerald Cities Collaborative\*
- Environmental Initiative
- Flint Rising
- Green for All
- GreenLatinos\*
- Gulf Coast Center on Law and Policy\* ^
- HBCU Climate Change Consortium / Dillard University Deep South Center for Environmental Justice
- HBCU Climate Change Consortium / Texas Southern University
- Honor the Earth\*
- Human Rights Watch
- Indigenous Environmental Network\*
- Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability
- Lower 9<sup>th</sup> Ward Center for Sustainable Engagement & Development
- Michigan Clean Water Campaign
- Michigan Environmental Council
- Milwaukee Water Commons\*
- NAACP Environment & Climate Justice Program\*
- NAACP South Side Chicago Branch\*
- Natural Resources Defense Council
- NDN Collective
- New Mexico Social Justice Equity Institute
- Northeastern University
- Partnership for Southern Equity
- PolicyLink\* ^
- Portland State University
- Public Health Alliance of Southern California
- River Network
- Sacred Places Institute for Indigenous Peoples' Sustainability at University of California, Irvine
- San Francisco Public Utilities District
- Southwest Workers Union
- Steps Coalition\*
- The Center on Race, Poverty, and the Environment
- The Kresge Foundation
- Union of Concerned Scientists
- US Water Alliance\*
- Verde
- Wakpá Wašté Scholars Alliance\*
- We the People of Detroit
- Western Reserve Land Conservancy

\* *founding steering committee*  
^ *caucus co-chairs*

