

Dear Governor Ivey,

Since long before the COVID-19 outbreak, Alabama and the Gulf South region have been in a deepening state of social, economic, environmental and climate crisis, and many Alabamians are living directly on the front lines of these converging crises. For too long extractive, polluting industries have exploited working families — our labor, our land, our waters, and our air — to maximize corporate profits while eroding the true wealth in our communities: the health and well-being of our people and the lands and waters that enable our ways of life.



The energy, petrochemical, and agribusiness industries in our state have already accelerated global climate change; harmed coastal wetlands and fisheries; and destroyed local economies, livelihoods, and Indigenous lifeways. The toxic legacy of environmental racism in our state, heightened by climate disasters like hurricanes, tornados, floods, droughts, and by the ongoing pandemic, has created extreme health risks for Black, Brown, Indigenous, and low-income communities. The dignity, rights, health, and safety of our state's energy workers, farmworkers, and fisherfolk and their families have been sacrificed for the sake of private profits and state revenues. We have sacrificed enough already — our people cannot afford to perpetuate this polluting economy.

Alabama's plentiful natural resources and rich biodiversity have provided an abundance of riches for generations, but this economy of exploitation is not sustainable. For context, here are some historic and current examples of our abusive economic system:

- Birmingham rapidly emerged as a leading industrial center of the South at the expense of the health and generational trauma of working people living near polluting facilities. Our people producing steel and other various materials were harmed, while the profits derived were largely exported.
- Our waterways were dammed to provide electricity and economic growth at the expense of native species and biodiverse aquatic habitats that filter and clean the water that sustains our lives and businesses.
- Many of Alabama's Frontline communities live in inefficient, unhealthy housing and neglected neighborhoods, while facing a legacy of slavery and continued worker exploitation such as prison labor. Industrial zoning, former company towns, systemic racism and poverty have perpetuated assaults on the health and wellbeing of Alabama's urban and rural communities while depleting our natural resources without sufficient regard for conservation to sustain and protect future generations.
- Agribusiness and manufacturing developed in Alabama under the guise of sustainability have become new methods of exploitation. Our landfill fees are discounted to attract waste from other states while harming local communities; our forests planted and harvested to export "green" fuel pellets without a full accounting of carbon emissions; and electric buses touted as sustainable are produced by workers without sufficient protections and benefits.
- Coal extracted in Alabama for industrial use and energy production is no longer economically viable for energy, leaving workers without comparable opportunities for good paying jobs and suffering from deadly illnesses. The accumulated discharges and residues of coal extraction, processing, and coal-fired power plants (particularly toxic coal ash) threatens the health and welfare of all our communities and must be addressed.

Alabama and her people will never achieve sustainability without accounting for the cost to people's health and well-being, the export of wealth and materials, and irreversible impacts to our natural systems. We demand a Green New Deal and a regenerative economy that works for all the people of Alabama. We are asking not only for your support, but for your leadership in Alabama, in this region, and in the nation.

Across the Gulf South — from Texas to Florida — communities have joined together to declare a collective vision: a vision to confront the climate crisis in a way that prioritizes justice and equity, guarantees dignified and well-paying jobs for all, and centers those most impacted by climate and environmental injustice.

We envision a Green New Deal that paves the way for a just and healthy Alabama where those most affected by climate change benefit first and most; where 100% clean, renewable energy powers our lives; and where workers are guaranteed the right to organize, unionize, and collectively bargain for healthy, good-paying, family-sustaining jobs. We envision a just economy that is centered on care and repair of both people and our planet — healthcare, education, ecological restoration, green infrastructure, and community wellness — rather than on extraction, pollution, and exploitation. We envision a society which ensures affordable, healthy and sustainable housing, access to affordable and renewable energy, low-carbon public transit, sustainable agriculture and fisheries, and equitable climate disaster planning and recovery. This collective vision is called "Gulf South for a Green New Deal."

To achieve a transformative vision in this moment, read the enclosed Gulf South for a Green New Deal (GS4GND) Policy Platform here. This frontlines document was developed through a six month collective regional process. Through a broader regional organizing effort, more than 100 original organizational signatories are listed, representing diverse constituencies across the Gulf South.

The Gulf South for a Green New Deal Policy Platform offers collective principles, goals, strategies, and opportunities to address what a Green New Deal must look like to be successful in the Gulf South and nationally. **We respectfully offer this document as a step towards successful management of our natural resources, climate justice, self-determination, and dignity for all people everywhere. As goes the South, so goes the nation.**

As our governor, we ask you to endorse this vision for a Green New Deal and follow the leadership of local, Black, Brown, Indigenous, and poor communities in transforming the economy in our state. We choose restorative justice, which calls us to enact the creed, "justice is what love looks like in public."

Signed,

Africatown CHESSE
Alabama Interfaith Power & Light
Alabama Rivers Alliance
Fair Housing Center
GASP

Gulf Coast Center for Law & Policy
Hometown Action
Hometown Organizing Project
People's Justice Council

Text CLIMATE to 55444
Let Gov. Ivey know you
support a Green New
Deal for Alabama!