



2026 August Recess Advocacy Guide

Build Just Climate Futures

Fund Local Climate Solutions: Invest in People Not Polluters

Hurricane season is officially underway, and several [scientific agencies are forecasting an active storm season](#) in the months ahead. At the same time, temperatures [above 100 degrees](#) are expected across west and southwest Texas, much of the Southwest, and California's interior valleys, and this year's recordbreaking wildfire season has already blanketed much of the country in smoke and displaced tens of thousands of people across multiple states in the North.

We know that the heaviest burden of extreme weather does not fall equally. Low-income communities and communities of color are often hit first and hardest. These communities have historically had the fewest resources to prepare for and recover from disasters, while also having the most at stake.

This season of heat, hurricanes and wildfires, we are highlighting how **investing in people and in local climate infrastructure in the most underserved communities builds long-term resilience to extreme weather events for all.** When we hold polluters accountable and direct resources where they are needed most, we can better protect lives, strengthen neighborhoods, and prepare communities to withstand the growing threats of extreme weather.

Environmental justice communities hold the solutions that will transition us from climate chaos to safe, healthy, and just climate futures. Environmental justice groups are investing in local climate infrastructure such as cooling centers, community hubs where residents can take shelter during weather events, expanding the tree canopy in urban neighborhoods, and educating their communities on how to prepare for and respond to weather events. A number of these initiatives have been supported by federal programs (such as the Community Change Grants, Collaborative Problem Solving Grants, and Climate Pollution Reduction Grants), which have been under attack by the Trump Administration.

AUGUST RECESS

As Members of Congress face their constituents during this year's August Recess, we need to set the tone for the lame duck session of Congress through authentic grassroots organizing. Members should return from recess with clear takeaways on the issues that matter most to their voters. Successful organizing and engagement can help ensure members know that being strong on climate, energy, and environmental justice is a top priority for their communities.

The 2026 August Recess Advocacy Toolkit supports grassroots groups in engaging their Members of Congress during the August recess to:

- Highlight how loss of funding for Environmental Justice programs worsens climate impacts for our communities.
- Showcase community-led, justice-centered climate solutions that improve a community's ability to withstand extreme weather events and require sustained federal investment and policy support; and
- Ask Members of Congress to protect and expand funding for local climate solutions, equitable climate resilience, clean energy access, health, and community infrastructure.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Use the "[How to Reach your MOC](#)" guide to **set up an in-person meeting** with your representative;
 - Use the "[Policy Priorities & Messaging Guide](#)" to **highlight local climate solutions** you are working on and persuade your elected representatives to commit to **protecting funding for federal programs that invest in local climate solutions** and protect us from climate-driven extreme weather.
- Use [social media](#) to **amplify and highlight the transformational power of investing in people** and in local climate infrastructure in the most underserved communities. **Tag us in your social media posts** [@ajustclimate](#) so that we can reshare and amplify your advocacy.
- **Write Op-ed and LTEs on local climate solutions** that you are working on that build long-term resiliency to extreme weather events.

- **Let us know** at cespedidio@ceed.org if you have hosted or participated in an event engaging your member of Congress during the August recess.
- Reach out to us at cespedidio@ceed.org if you are not hosting an event but would like to participate and engage in climate events hosted in your district by other groups.



POLICY PRIORITIES

This August, you can engage your Member of Congress while they are in your district by showcasing how local climate solutions benefit their constituents. **Environmental justice communities hold the solutions that will transition us from climate chaos to safe, healthy, and just climate futures.** Environmental justice groups are investing in local climate infrastructure such as cooling centers, community hubs where residents can take shelter during weather events, expanding the tree canopy in urban neighborhoods, and educating their communities on how to prepare for and respond to weather events. A number of these initiatives have been supported by federal programs (such as the Community Change Grants, Collaborative Problem Solving Grants, and Climate Pollution Reduction Grants), which have been under attack by the Trump Administration.

Through in-person engagements, we can **hold our elected representatives accountable to their commitments to environmental and climate justice.** Ask your federal elected official to publicly commit to one or more of these essential policy priorities:

1. **Fund federal programs that invest in local climate solutions and protect us from climate-driven extreme weather.** The Trump Administration has eliminated programs such as the Community Change Grants, EPA's Collaborative Problem Solving Grants, Thriving Communities Grant Program, and Climate Pollution Reduction Grants, which were designed to build cooling centers, resilience hubs, and other local climate infrastructure in the most underserved communities.
2. **Oppose and block further erosion of the EPA's budget and staffing,** particularly resources dedicated to community-based monitoring, public health protections, and climate resilience programs.
3. **Co-sponsor and actively support the Environmental Justice For All Act,** ensuring that environmental justice communities are not merely consulted but empowered to lead climate solutions.

MESSAGE GUIDANCE

CORE MESSAGE

Every community deserves to live with health, dignity, and prosperity, and no one should be sacrificed for corporate profit. Communities on the frontlines of pollution and climate disasters hold the solutions. When they lead, lasting change follows. We have a blueprint for

a future that nourishes our bodies, revitalizes neighborhoods, creates good jobs, and keeps us safe.

WHAT IS AT STAKE?

We know that the heaviest burden of extreme weather does not fall equally. Low-income communities and communities of color are often hit first and hardest. These communities have historically had the fewest resources to prepare for and recover from disasters, while also having the most at stake.

- Communities of color experience higher average temperatures, [more extreme heat days](#), and greater increases in overall heat exposure. Due to a long legacy of racial segregation and redlining, Black communities are disproportionately located in areas that are more physically vulnerable to [hurricanes and flooding](#). During Hurricane Katrina, more than [80% of the homes lost belonged to Black residents](#), and Black people accounted for over half of the storm's fatalities.
- The same inequities show up in wildfire risk. [One national study](#) found that wildfire vulnerability is not shared equally: communities that are majority Black, Hispanic, or Native American face roughly 50% greater vulnerability than other communities.

Amidst rising costs and climate chaos, EJ communities are up against outrageous rollbacks on commonsense clean air protections that are costing people their health and quality of life. The Trump Administration has clawed back billions of dollars of environmental justice investments through the One Big Beautiful Bill Act and through administrative action. The loss of the community grants represents at least [\\$6.4 billion in economic opportunity and 65,000 jobs](#) lost. See our [Rollbacks Fact Sheet for more information](#) on the Trump Administration's rollbacks of environmental justice investments.

BUILDING JUST CLIMATE FUTURES

The story does not end with the rollbacks of environmental justice funding and giveaways to polluters. Together, we mobilize neighbors, advocates, scientists, and policymakers toward the solutions our communities need and keep alive the fight that when frontline communities lead, lasting change follows for all of us.

- **Environmental justice communities hold the solutions that will transition us from climate chaos to safe, healthy, and just climate futures.** Environmental justice groups are investing in local climate infrastructure such as cooling centers, community hubs where residents can take shelter during weather events, expanding the tree canopy in urban neighborhoods, and educating their communities on how to prepare for and respond to weather events.

- When we **direct resources where they are needed most**, we can better protect lives, strengthen neighborhoods, and prepare communities to withstand the growing threats of extreme weather.
- **Climate and environmental justice investments strengthen the safety net we all** rely on: clean air, clean water, and disaster preparedness and recovery. The people's voice for environmental health and justice is everywhere – organized, powerful, and ready to act. We have investment-ready solutions that create jobs, protect health, and revitalize neighborhoods.
- **We have a blueprint for a future** that nourishes our bodies, revitalizes neighborhoods, creates good jobs, and keeps us safe. It's a future we deserve and one that cannot wait.

Congress can help champion and protect local climate solutions by ensuring that the EPA, NOAA, and FEMA have the funding, staffing, and scientific capacity needed to prepare for and respond to extreme weather events.



Environmental Justice Investment Rollbacks

The Trump Administration has clawed back billions of dollars in environmental justice investments through the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA) and through administrative action.

ALLOCATED FUNDING CLAWBACKS

Since taking office, the Trump Administration has cut, closed, or withdrawn from environmental justice grants, offices, and programs.

- Between 2022 and 2024, thousands of communities worked for months in partnership with their cities and counties to apply for federal grants, many for the first time, to address decades of pollution and build climate resiliency in their neighborhoods. In 2025, the administration canceled or froze many of these already allocated community grants.
- A [2025 report](#) by WE ACT for Environmental Justice and NRDC found that **of the \$37 billion slated for communities across 12 grant programs, 78 percent (\$29 billion) had been canceled or frozen**, making it inaccessible to grantees.
- The affected projects included efforts to address extreme flooding, remove lead and asbestos from family homes, and monitor pollution in homes and schools.
- Notably, these funds were clawed back despite an [EPA Inspector General finding](#) that the EJ grant programs had been administered with integrity.

OBBBA RESCISSIONS

The [One Big Beautiful Bill Act](#), signed into law in July 2025, rescinded unobligated funding for nearly every EPA program that reduces pollution burdens in overburdened communities. Recipients of these grants included state environmental and health departments, regulatory agencies, city and county governments, schools, nonprofits, and Tribal communities. Their work ranged from removing lead from schools to building community disaster preparedness plans. Notable EJ-related rescissions in the OBBBA include:

- **Environmental and Climate Justice Block Grant Program:** The Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) created the program and appropriated \$2.8 billion for financial assistance and \$200 million for technical assistance. The OBBBA rescinded all unobligated balances.

- **Air Pollution Monitoring and Control:** The OBBBA rescinded unobligated IRA funding for fenceline air monitoring, screening air monitoring, National Air Toxics Trends Stations, and other community air-toxics monitoring efforts.
- **Clean Heavy-Duty Vehicles:** The IRA appropriated roughly \$1 billion to the EPA to expand zero-emission vehicle adoption, \$600 million to replace gas-powered vehicles and build supporting infrastructure and workforce, and \$400 million to replace vehicles serving communities with poor air quality. The OBBBA rescinded all unobligated balances.

ONGOING THREATS

There are multiple overlapping efforts underway to permanently defund environmental justice work.

- **FY27 President's Budget Request:** Released April 3, 2026, the [administration's FY27 budget](#) proposes \$4.2 billion for the EPA, a more than 50 percent cut from the \$8.8 billion Congress enacted for FY26, and the agency's lowest funding level since the 1980s. The proposal calls for the complete elimination of EPA's environmental justice programs, the Atmospheric Protection Program, Diesel Emissions Reduction Act grants, and nearly all grants to states. The FY27 President's budget request signals that the administration intends to keep pressing for these cuts each budget cycle. The [House's FY27 spending bill](#) would cut EPA funding by 20 percent rather than 50 percent, but even this reduction would still significantly take away environmental justice investment and pollution enforcement efforts.
- **Surface Transportation Reauthorization (BUILD America 250 Act, H.R. 8870):** The House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee advanced a \$580 billion, five-year reauthorization bill on May 22, 2026. As introduced, the bill would terminate the [Neighborhood Access and Equity \(NAE\) Grant Program](#) created under the IRA with a \$3.2 billion appropriation to help communities improve walkability, safety, and transportation access. The NAE program had previously been defended from repeal during the OBBBA negotiations, making this a renewed attempt to eliminate funding that survived the first round of cuts. The bill also repeals or reduces funding for several programs that support EJ and climate action from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), which had survived the OBBBA cuts. The Senate has not yet released companion legislation, and current highway and transit authorities expire September 30, 2026.
- **Litigation over already-terminated grants:** Grant recipients, including nonprofits and several major cities, are in active litigation ([The Sustainability Institute et al.](#)) seeking to force the EPA to reinstate nearly \$3 billion in terminated environmental and climate justice grants, after a federal judge ruled in their favor but declined to directly order reinstatement, citing EPA's staffing cuts to the office that would

administer the program. The case illustrates how, even where courts find the cancellations unlawful, related staffing cuts have complicated efforts to restore funding in practice



AUGUST RECESS ENGAGEMENT

Members of Congress return to their home districts every August for three to four weeks, and this is one of the best opportunities for in-person constituent engagement. District offices are more accessible, members are attending local events and town halls, and community visibility is high.

Members of Congress typically maintain two offices: a district office and a DC office. District offices build relationships in the community and ensure that a member's work in Congress is grounded in constituent concerns. District offices also often lead constituent services ranging from tracking passport delays to resolving problems with Social Security, Medicare, or military and veterans' pensions. The DC office, by contrast, focuses on national priorities and legislative procedure in Congress.

Below are tips for engaging your member of Congress and their district office effectively during recess.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR MEMBER OF CONGRESS

The first step is understanding your members' priorities and track record on the issues you care about. Members often champion issues by sponsoring bills, cosponsoring legislation, or offering amendments. They publicize priorities through committee hearings, press statements, floor speeches, and social media. Caucus positions and leadership roles, "dear colleague" or other sign-on letters, and stakeholder roundtables can also reveal where a member stands.

Helpful starting points:

- Check the latest press statements on the member's official website.
- Use [Congress.gov](https://www.congress.gov) for bill tracking and voting history.
- Use the latest [LCV Scorecard](#) to learn about a member's environmental voting record.
- Check whether your member is a cosponsor of the [EJ for All Act](#).

Use this research to shape your ask. Your research should directly inform how you frame your message and not just serve as background reading. If your member has a strong environmental voting record but hasn't spoken publicly about EJ-specific funding clawbacks, that's an opening to bring the issue directly to their attention. If your member has not co-sponsored the EJ for All Act, frame your ask around *why* they should co-sponsor or support similar legislation. For help translating this research into specific talking points and requests, see the "[Policy Priorities & Messaging](#)" memo.

CHOOSING AND PLANNING THE RIGHT ENGAGEMENT

Engagement options range from high-planning, high-impact engagements, such as site visits, to lower-lift options, such as attending an event hosted by the member's office or a local organization. Consider your capacity and goals when choosing.

Requesting a District Office Meeting

You can call or email the district office directly to set up a meeting with your member of Congress. Contact information is available on your member's official website. *Below is a sample template email you can use to request a meeting.*

You can request to meet with the member in their office. You can also get them out into the community and set up the meeting at a local coffee shop, a community center, or a community project site. If your member of Congress is not available to meet with you, do not be discouraged. You can still meet with the district staff, and this is still quite impactful. This can be an important relationship for you to have in the long term. District office staff can help identify future opportunities for deeper engagements with the Member. Here are some best practices:

- **State clearly why you want to meet** (e.g., share a success story of building climate solutions in your community, discuss a community project that lost funding due to federal investment clawbacks, share ongoing pollution and environmental concerns in your community, such as the rising build-out of data centers or the old Superfund site that still needs clean up).
- **Consider inviting local partners and community members** to join you.
- **Prepare and practice what you want to say**, your story, your organization's story, community priorities and concerns, and **any clear asks**. Assign roles (speakers, moderator) ahead of time.
- **Work closely with district staff** in the weeks leading up to the meeting to share your purpose for asking for the meeting, attendee list, and run of show, including specific topics you plan to raise.
- **Follow up within 48 hours** with a thank-you note that reiterates your ask and offers to be an ongoing resource.

Attending Town Halls

Members often organize town halls in their districts during recess. These are opportunities to showcase constituent engagement on climate and environmental justice, ask pointed

questions, hold members accountable to their votes, and connect with other local groups working on similar issues. To find out whether your member is hosting an in-person town hall near you, check their website or social media page. You can sign up to ask a question and recruit members of your organization and local partner organizations to attend the town hall with you. If you plan to ask a question, make sure to briefly share your story, who you are, and why you are attending the town hall. Some members hold virtual or tele-town halls instead of, or in addition to, in-person events, particularly common in rural districts. These usually allow call-in questions; check the member's website for dial-in details and RSVP requirements. You should also plan to follow up with the office or email them the next day.

Organizing a Site Visit

A site visit can take several forms: inviting the member to your organizational headquarters to meet the community you serve; a visit to a project site that was awarded and then lost funding from a federal environmental justice grant program; an environmental justice tour showcasing climate solutions your community is working on (like a community garden or a green workforce training center); or a toxics tour to help the member understand how industrial facilities in the district affect community health.

Site visits require significant operational capacity to organize. To make these engagements successful, you should plan to:

- Think through the impact stories and the climate solution you want to showcase. **Consider communicating one to two clear asks during the visit.** You can use the [“Policy Priorities & Messaging”](#) memo to help you shape your ask.
- Consider **collaborating with multiple local partners** who share your organization's advocacy interests to share the workload and represent the cross-section of issues, including climate, that you and your community members care about.
- **Work closely with the district office staff** to prepare a detailed briefing for the Member on the key purpose of the visit, the list of attendees, and a run-of-show for the entire visit. The briefing should include as much detail as possible, including who they will be interacting with, whether they will be given the floor to make remarks, and any press presence.
- **Plan for accessibility and logistics.** Confirm the site is ADA-accessible, arrange interpretation or translation support if community members are more comfortable in a language other than English, and consider transportation support for community members who need it to attend.
- Consider **inviting local press** to increase visibility on the impacts or solutions you are showcasing at the site visit.
- **Follow up within 48 hours.** Send a thank-you note to the staffer or your member's office, reiterating any ask you might have made and offering to be a resource going forward.

- **Stay in touch with the district office staff.** Share updates with them when your member's office responds or when there are developments on issues you care about. Invite them to future actions, meetings, letters, calls, and public events.

Sample Meeting Request Email

Dear []

I am writing to request a brief meeting with [REPRESENTATIVE'S NAME] or a member of their staff during the August congressional recess.

We are [ORGANIZATION NAME] based out of the [STATE/DISTRICT], and we work with environmental justice communities on [BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF ISSUES YOU WORK ON]

Since the start of the current administration, all federal environmental justice programs have been under attack. [STATE IF YOU WERE A RECIPIENT OF EJ PROGRAM FUNDS]. Despite federal rollbacks, we have continued to make progress in our community by building local climate resilience through [COMMUNITY PROJECT].

We would love to meet with [REPRESENTATIVE'S NAME] to share ongoing concerns about toxics and worsening climate impacts in our communities and to showcase the solutions we are working on that need ongoing support from Congress.

We are available anytime during [DATE RANGE] and are happy to meet in person at the district office or [LOCATION SUGGESTION].

Please feel free to reply to this email or reach me at [YOUR PHONE NUMBER]. Thank you for your time and your service to [STATE/DISTRICT].

Warm regards, [YOUR NAME] [YOUR ADDRESS / CITY, ZIP] [YOUR EMAIL] [YOUR PHONE]

Sources

Union of Concerned Scientists. (2026). UCS generations of science.

<https://www.ucs.org/resources/august-congressional-recess-2026>

Saturno, J. V. (2023). *Introduction to the federal budget process* (CRS Report No. R46240, Version 3). Congressional Research Service. [Congress.gov CRS Report R46240](https://www.congress.gov/CRS/Reports/2023/R46240)

National Council of Nonprofits. (2026). *Advocating for federal spending: A practical guide for nonprofits*.

<https://www.councilofnonprofits.org/files/media/documents/2026/advocating-for-federal-funding-toolkit-2026.pdf>

National Council of Nonprofits. (2026). *August recess: A critical window of opportunity*.

<https://www.councilofnonprofits.org/files/media/documents/2026/2026-August-Recess-One-Pager-and-Checklist.pdf>

League of Conservation Voters. (2025, March 20). *How to call your members of Congress in 3 easy steps*.

<https://www.lcv.org/blog/how-to-call-your-members-of-congress-in-3-easy-steps/>

League of Conservation Voters. (2025, March). *How to effectively engage with your member of Congress*.

<https://www.lcv.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/How-to-Effectively-Engage-with-your-Member-of-Congress-LCV.pdf>



SAMPLE SOCIAL CONTENT

Suggested Hashtags:

- #JustClimateFutures
- #AJustClimate

[Graphics can be found here](#)

General Graphics

Social Post:	Graphic/Video - Folder
We deserve community solutions that create #JustClimateFutures from the people, by the people 🦊 From cooling centers to extreme weather relief to creating more green spaces, these programs give power back to our communities. With federal funding that makes this possible under attack, we must speak up and demand that our members of Congress stand behind their commitments and protect funding and policies that protect our communities! Shortened for X, Threads & Bluesky: We deserve community solutions that create #JustClimateFutures from the people, by the people 🦊 Let your members of Congress stand behind their commitments and protect funding and policies that protect our communities!	 [1 of 5, download all graphics there and post in carousel]

SHARE YOUR STORY OF JUST CLIMATE SOLUTIONS IN YOUR COMMUNITY!

Examples of just climate solutions are vibrant throughout the country - we would love to hear your story! We encourage you to create similar content for groups and individuals doing this work in your community. If you'd like support in sharing the just climate solution stories of your community, please reach out to Anahí at anaranjo@ceed.org



OPINION AND LETTERS TO THE EDITOR GUIDANCE

Goals of the Op-eds & LTEs:

Use the Messaging Guidance above to write your Op-ed and LTE to do the following:

- **Highlight local climate solutions you are working on.** You might be distributing fans, air purifiers, to your constituents this summer or building a resilience hub with your community. We know that environmental justice communities and groups organize each other to protect each other from extreme weather events. However, these community solutions need a spotlight as the way out of this climate crisis.
- **Call on Congress to step up unequivocally to invest in people, invest in environmental justice programs instead of corporate polluters.** There must be no capitulation to the corporate polluter agenda of deregulation and extraction, and no retreat from environmental justice policies, which enjoy broad voter support and are key to solving the health, climate, and cost-of-living crises.

OP-ED & LTE DRAFTING TIPS + Guidance

- **Use plain language:** Consider your audience and avoid jargon. Write for your neighbors, not policy experts.
- **Show who's harmed, and who benefits:** Consider a storyteller to sign the op-ed; if not, use one real story to anchor your piece and keep it short and local.
- **Name the villain:** Call out and tie together the harm caused by corporate polluters, and the Trump administration's rollbacks.
- **Lead with health:** Define the health impacts, connect them to higher rates of asthma and cancer, heat, floods, and missed work or school. And connect the dots that more pollution leads to higher medical bills, higher energy costs, and a weaker democracy.
- **Define environmental justice clearly:** Simplify and use the shared definition: Environmental justice means making sure every person in this country—no matter their ZIP code, income, or background—has clean air, clean water, and a safe, healthy community.
- **Tie in the Platform:** Reference the [Platform for a Just Climate](#) as a national coalition rooted in frontline communities.

- **End with a call to action:** Tell Congress what to do now, protect environmental justice investments and protections.

CALL TO ACTION

One year after the Trump administration launched an unprecedented assault on Environmental Justice, our communities are still here – and we are not backing down.

- 1. Fund federal programs that invest in local climate solutions and protect us from climate-driven extreme weather.** The Trump Administration has eliminated programs such as the Community Change Grants, EPA's Collaborative Problem Solving Grants, Thriving Communities Grant Program, and Climate Pollution Reduction Grants, which were designed to build cooling centers, resilience hubs, and other local climate infrastructure in the most underserved communities.
- 2. Oppose and block further erosion of the EPA's budget and staffing,** particularly resources dedicated to community-based monitoring, public health protections, and climate resilience programs.