



## Leading Latino/a/x-serving Organizations Author Sign-On Letter Rejecting Manchin’s Secret “Dirty Deal” with the Fossil Fuel Industry

September 12, 2022

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker, United States House of Representatives  
U.S. Capitol Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chuck Schumer  
Majority Leader, United States Senate  
U.S. Capitol Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Leader Schumer,

The undersigned organizations, representing thousands of Latino/a/x community members, write to express our strong opposition to the dirty fossil fuel infrastructure permitting side deal drafted by the American Petroleum Institute (API) and demanded by Senator Joe Manchin (D-WV) in exchange for his support for the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 (IRA). Passage of this ill-conceived secret side-deal would silence the voice of our already overburdened communities, quash our hard-earned right to self-determination, and put our families health and welfare at serious risk.

The IRA already inflicts our communities with expanded fossil fuel development, processing, and infrastructure. If we load on to that the passage of pollution permitting legislation that would limit public review, input, and government accountability in the permitting review process, it would further undermine and even reverse the many historic investments over the next decade for the Latino/a/x comunidad brought on by the IRA.

A leaked draft of text shows the watermark of the API, clear proof that the side deal was developed by the fossil fuel industry. The proposed text aims to gut existing permitting review processes administered through the bedrock National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) law by weakening public consultation, input and review processes. NEPA is one of the strongest tools our communities have to ensure our voices are heard during the build out of large infrastructure projects. Without proper consultation and review of project impacts, our communities could be left defenseless against giant fossil fuel polluters, while our families and children are seriously and irrevocably harmed.

The legislation's additional limitations on State and Tribal authority to evaluate the impacts of federally licensed projects, such as fossil fuel pipelines, on our waterways and wetlands would not only put at risk water quality, but also impact natural environments that provide critical protection for our communities. The protection of valuable wetlands is especially relevant now as we continue to see more frequent and devastating weather and flooding events exacerbated by the climate crisis. The bill ultimately aims to prioritize the development of fossil fuel projects at the expense of our frontline communities.

We cannot in good conscience allow this to happen on our watch.

For Latino/a/xs, the disproportionate pollution burden from industry is significant. Recent analysis shows that approximately 1.6 million Latinos/as/xs in the U.S. live within a half-mile of an oil or gas facility, with increased exposure to pollutants from oil and gas air pollution. People of color are more likely than white counterparts to live near oil refineries and petrochemical plants and pollution-emitting transportation infrastructure like ports and highways. People living in majority Latino/a/x neighborhoods are dangerously exposed to higher particulate matter and nitrogen oxides levels than residents of majority white neighborhoods, contributing to higher overall rates of heart disease, cancer and asthma.

This dirty secretly negotiated deal must be decoupled from any must-pass legislation and vigorously opposed by our congressional leaders, committee chairs, and all members who are elected to office to represent and protect us, not sell the health of our children to the highest bidder. Congress should do everything in its power to protect NEPA and, in order to codify these protections, pass the Environmental Justice for All Act. These actions are critical to ensure that the communities who continue to bear the brunt of harm from fossil fuels are heard and have the ability to defend themselves against polluting industries and infrastructure in their neighborhoods.

Sincerely,

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**Alianza Americas**

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